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# CASABLANCA OF THE CARIBBEAN: CUBAN REFUGEES, LOCAL POWER, AND COLD WAR POLICY IN MIAMI, 1959-1995

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# CASABLANCA OF THE CARIBBEAN: CUBAN REFUGEES, LOCAL POWER, AND COLD WAR POLICY IN MIAMI, 1959-1995

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# ABSTRACT

Castro, Mauricio F. Ph.D., Purdue University, August 2015. Casablanca of the Caribbean: Cuban Refugees, Local Power, and Cold War Policy in Miami, 1959-1995. Major Professor: Jon Teaford.

This dissertation chronicles the history of the city of Miami, Florida in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. A heavy influx of Cuban exiles following the rise to power of Fidel Castro fundamentally changed the economic, social, and political landscape of the city. This work examines the relationship between the Cuban exile community, the United States government, and local government, civic, and social groups in the city. The federal government extended a welcome to the Cuban exiles that was motivated by Cold War concerns, identifying them as potential assets in the fight against Marxism in Latin America. While the benefits provided to the Cuban refugees were meant to be transitory, as their stay in the United States was expected to be, the federal government provided the exiles with access to structures of privilege that were parallel to those associated with middle class whiteness in the postwar period. This transfer of funds and the ideological moorings that drove it ties Miami more directly to the Sunbelt pattern of economic and social development than has been previously acknowledged. This work argues that the presence of the large Cuban community in Miami does not make the city an outlier to the larger American urban experience, but instead makes it central to that experience. The city of Miami in the decades after the Cuban Revolution is also central to expanding our understanding of race relations in the United States. The interactions between the Cuban community, the non-Hispanic white community, and the African American

community in Miami complicate our understanding of race relations in this time period. Finally, this dissertation tracks the growth in power, wealth, and influence of the Cuban community in the United States and illustrates the permeability of the divides between local, national, and transnational. The history of Miami shows how local events can be influenced by and, in turn, influence transnational trends and international events.

# INTRODUCTION—CASABLANCA OF THE CARIBBEAN

On Saturday, August 7, 1976 *The Miami Herald* featured a report in its local news section about a delay in the installation of four domino tables in a recently renovated mini-park. The park, now a well-known Little Havana landmark called Maximo Gomez Park, had been a vacant lot owned by the city and a gathering spot for the area's Cuban domino aficionados. The city had planned to construct an official park with domino tables and had informed the public that the project would take three weeks. The domino players had been welcomed by Miguel Galiano, the owner of an auto repair shop across the street from the lot, who provided them with wooden shacks and electric lights. Much to the dismay of the players, and of Galiano, the three-week wait turned into a six-month ordeal. The city had spent $56,248 on the renovations and had continually postponed the park's opening. The final straw had been a delay in the installation of the last four domino tables planned for the park. While city officials stated the tables and their corresponding chairs were on order, the frustrated players issued an ultimatum that if the tables were not installed by Monday they would move their old tables from the auto shop's land to the park. The *Herald's* reporter, Miguel Perez, conveyed the frustrations of the players and the city planners in a local-color piece about a minor oversight.[1]

The story, innocuous as it was, prompted one reader to craft an enraged letter to Perez and the *Herald*. "My heart bleeds for the poor Cuban Refugee who has to sit on his big ass and play dominos all day long at the expense of the American Tax Dollar and the Cuban Refugee

[1] Miguel Perez, "Domino Players Want Their Spot Back Now," *Miami Herald*, August 7, 1976.

Give-Away Program," Irving H. Miller wrote.[2] Miller was referring to the Cuban Refugee Program, a federal initiative established in 1961 under the direction of President John F. Kennedy to deal with the influx of Cuban exiles fleeing Fidel Castro's revolution. Perez's article made no mention of the program, but its continued presence in South Florida was still problematic to Miamians like Miller. He saw the impatience of the players as a symptom of something created by federal entities like the CRP: an unwarranted sense of entitlement. Miller had watched the Cuban exiles receive government resources in the name of national security and had seen them change the face of Miami in what he considered uncomfortably permanent ways. He did not credit Miami's Cuban Americans with the positive aspects of these changes—the rejuvenation of downtown Miami for instance—but instead asked Perez just how far he expected "the American Tax Payer to go on the free ride for the 'poor Cuban' who is going to win back his homeland playing dominos at the expense of the United States?"[3] In Miller's mind, the Cubans had been nothing but a drain on his city, his state, and his country for seventeen years.

Miller's message to Perez reflects not only the political tension that surrounded the Cuban community in Cold War Miami, but also the intrinsic connections between transnational trends and local events in the city. The Cuban Revolution sparked a migration that brought an estimated 828,577 Cuban exiles to the United States by 2000.[4] The majority of these exiles either settled in South Florida immediately or returned to the area after a period of resettlement elsewhere in the United States. Washington granted these exiles special entry and tenure in the United States based on Cold War concerns regarding the spread of communism in

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[2] Irving H. Miller, letter to Miguel Perez, *Miami Herald* reporter, August 7 1976, Bernardo Benes Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Cuban Heritage Collection, Coral Gables, FL (Hereafter cited as CHC).
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Information gathered by the 2000 U.S. Census, see Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

Latin America. Federal officials expected that the Cuban refugees they were giving asylum to would only stay in the United States for a short period of time. Early in the Cuban diaspora, policymakers believed that the Castro regime would collapse within a few months or years, either through the machinations of the American intelligence community, through diplomatic pressure, or through internal discontent. The U.S. government publicly embraced the Cuban exiles as living proof of the failures of international communism and committed to aiding them as part of the ideological struggle of the Cold War. What American policymakers, as well as the exiles that came to the United States with phrases like "next year in Cuba" and "we'll be back in Cuba in six months" on their lips, did not expect was that the revolution was not transitory. The exile, in the minds of both the Cuban exiles and American federal officials, was meant to be a brief interlude in the history of the Cuban people.

The exiles presented a potential opportunity for the U.S. government to lay the foundation for a post-Castro Cuba that would better fit American interests in Latin America. While the Eisenhower administration sought to exploit the paramilitary potential of the Cuban exiles for a violent overthrow of Castro's regime, the Bay of Pigs invasion made officials in the Kennedy administration embrace the importance of maintaining a vibrant and active civilian community. By providing assistance that helped the Cuban exile community retain its professional and entrepreneurial skills, the U.S. government sought to maintain the core of a democratic, capitalistic civil society in a near-future Cuba. The welcome offered to the Cuban exile community by the federal government was accordingly unprecedented. No previous refugee or immigrant group had ever been provided with an open door immigration policy compounded a massive economic investment aimed at ensuring their prosperity. The Cuban exile community embraced the opportunities provided by the federal government and

expanded on them through their educational, social, and entrepreneurial experience, adapting it to a business environment that was at once foreign and familiar.

Rather than becoming a new underclass in South Florida, the Cuban community received a massive investment in direct aid, training programs, and small business loans that helped empower them. By funneling defense funds into the Cuban refugee community, the federal government inadvertently created a powerful social and political group that would demand and gain access to certain Cold War economic privileges that white, middle-class citizens sought for themselves. The emerging Cuban American community took full advantage of these benefits and through organization and entrepreneurship came to challenge the power of entrenched local elites who, as Miller's letter shows, felt threatened and resented this advancement. As the years and decades went on and the Cuban revolution solidified its hold on the island, the American federal government found itself unintentionally partnered with the exiles in fundamentally changing the social, economic, and political landscape of South Florida.

While Miami had served as a gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean for the United States before the Cuban revolution, the turmoil in the area fundamentally tied the city to the region. Miami became a transit point for refugees, exiles, revolutionaries, and mercenaries as multiple conflicts raged on. At least twice, in two different decades, the city's largest newspaper, the *Miami Herald*, described Miami as the "Casablanca of the Caribbean."[5] The Moroccan city was a symbol of refugee migrations in a time of war and of intrigue in the American popular imagination. The term likely resonated with the *Herald's* readership, especially those readers whose romanticized view of a thriving, cosmopolitan, dynamic

[5] Please see James Buchanan, "Miami the Casablanca of Caribbean," *Miami Herald*, July 20, 1959 and John Dorschner, "Miami: Casablanca Of The Caribbean," *Miami Herald Tropic Magazine*, April 4, 1976.

Moroccan metropolis came via the wartime film *Casablanca*, staring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Readers were likely to remember a city that served as the meeting point of different cultures in a time of conflict and political upheaval, a city that served as a clearing house for refugees, exiles, patriots, and freedom fighters, and a city in which a struggle between light and darkness finally roused a figure of American complacency into action. While the realities of the international situations affecting Miami were far more complex than any Hollywood film, the reference allowed Miamians to understand that the clashes playing out on their streets were extensions of foreign conflicts. Likewise, the changes to Miami in the wake of the Cuban revolution gave the city its own aura and identity in the American popular imagination, one which has created the erroneous impression that Miami's story is fundamentally alien to the larger experience of U.S. history at the time. The history of Miami, however, is essential to our understanding of Cold War American cities as sites shaped by the convergence of local and global forces.

Miami's residents found their everyday experiences directly affected by Cold War strategies. As such, their lives in the city are crucial to our understanding of the effects of policy as lived in American environments. This dissertation argues that the Cuban presence in Miami does not fundamentally remove the city's history from the patterns that shaped postwar urban development. While several excellent historical studies have been written on the Cuban refugee experience and the creation of the Cuban American community, these trends are often studied in isolation.[6] The events surrounding and initiated by this group tend to be considered unique and distinctive in the larger scheme of U.S. history. On the surface, this perception of

[6] These works include Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008) and María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

the Cuban story in Miami and elsewhere in the United States appears accurate. This work pierces through the obfuscation created by this view in order to lay bare the underlying structures that provide continuities between Miami's history and that of other American cities. Miami's story is not that of a curious outlier because of the Cuban presence. This history, rather, is essential to our understanding of the development of racial, political, and economic hierarchies created by the confluence of the welfare and national security states in the postwar United States. The Cuban presence makes Miami an essential site of inquiry for scholars of the American experience in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Historians have, in recent years, engaged cities like Miami by combining the methodologies of social and political history. Scholars have brought urban case studies to the vanguard of the discipline, making manifestations of the local essential to national discussions of race, politics, and the structures of privilege.[7] These historians have yet to account, however, for the ways in which individual towns and cities have been affected by transnational trends or how local events can shape the international stage. They are still bound by the artificial divisions between the studies of foreign and domestic policy and between policy and social history that obfuscate the complexities of the relationships between the local and the transnational, the personal and the institutional. These artificial distinctions must be jettisoned by blending local and national sources into a textured historical account of Miami's post-1959 ascent that has profound implications for the study of postwar urban history in the United States. This approach positions broader trends in relation to the experiences of the individuals

[7] See for example: Elizabeth Tandy Shermer, *Sunbelt Capitalism: Phoenix and the Transformation of American Politics* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Thomas J. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

and groups who were forced to construct lives and communities in the midst of local, national, and international turmoil. Miami provides the perfect backdrop for a much-needed study of the interaction between national governments, local authorities, religious and civic groups, Cuban exile and Cuban American organizations, and the individuals who made the city their home. These historical actors changed Miami, but in time they would also have a significant effect upon national politics and upon American foreign relations. The history of Miami lays bare the structural links that tie American cities to larger global developments. It shows how, in effect, the local and the transnational are one and the same.

Connecting social and political history is essential when presenting a broader perspective on American foreign relations and the consequences of foreign policy. Foreign policy is not an isolated concern disconnected from other areas of study in American history, just as the history of Miami is not isolated from that of the rest of the country. The decisions of policymakers charged with engaging the United States with the rest of the world initiate ripple effects with long term implications for all aspects of American society. Historians of the South and West have begun to investigate the consequences of these policymakers' actions by focusing on the increasing importance of the Sunbelt in post-1945 U.S history. They have demonstrated how federal defense spending constituted a massive influx of wealth that transformed communities throughout the Sunbelt but did not fundamentally challenge the social and racial structures already in place in these regions. These foreign policy based decisions, however, had far more varied effects than previously understood. The flow of close to two billion dollars in federal funds to aid the Cuban exiles, most of who settled or had a

temporary stay in Miami was an investment in a Cold War asset.[8] The federal funds spent in the city following the arrival of the Cuban exiles were analogous those expended in opening of defense plants and research centers in other strategic locations. Instead of purchasing weapons and technological advancements, the federal government sought to purchase human assets that would further the fight against Marxism abroad. In this way, the growth of the Cuban community and its positive impact on South Florida's economy makes the city fit into the structures that drove the growth of Sunbelt cities in the postwar.

The work of several scholars has shown that in many Sunbelt cities the federal government's expenditures improved general economic fortunes while reinforcing entrenched social and racial power structures. The effects of the Cuban Refugee Program and related expenditures, however, fundamentally challenged the racial order and power relations in Miami. By bolstering the economic fortunes of the Cuban community instead of those of existing elites, the federal government profoundly altered power relations in Miami. The Cuban exile community was given access to economic privileges that are parallel to those associated with middle-class whiteness in the postwar United States. The early waves of the Cuban exiles seized on these opportunities to make use of their educational and business backgrounds and set about establishing a new power base in their host city. This elicited the ire of established class and racial elites in the area and the discontent of the city's African American community which saw a new exile group being granted access to benefits denied them for centuries.

Historians have produced important works on the links between race and American political development, but few have accounted for how transnational population movements

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[8] Figure quoted in Miguel A. De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 37.

fundamentally altered the racial composition of American cities.[9] Even the best of these studies remain fixated on the relationships between black and white Americans, presenting Latinos and other groups as afterthoughts, if at all. The transnational approach of this dissertation is necessary to understand the complex racial landscape of the creation of multicultural America. This approach demands that historians move past the idea that the color line extends only in two directions in American history and that they seek to fully integrate other groups that have been previously treated as outliers and have not had their voices heard. While these groups were more visible in Miami than in other places, the more fluid, multilateral power relations that undergird Miami's history serve to correct a long standing oversight in our historical perspective. The interactions between the Cuban community, the white and African American communities, and other groups in Miami challenge the black/white racial binary that obscures our understanding of the multicultural metropolitan experience.

The Cuban exile community's tenure and the establishment of a Cuban American identity in Miami also serve to show that the divisions between history at the transnational scale and the local scale are far more porous than has been acknowledged. The conflict between the United States and Cuba and the larger Cold War had an immediate and visible effect on the streets of Miami. Events occurring in downtown Miami or Hialeah had the same urgency to the conflict as those taking place in Havana or Washington. The effects and changes to the city led to new social structures and new sources of local economic and political power. These local developments, in turn, would affect the very foreign policy that had set them in motion. Events

[9] Scholars have analyzed the interactions between multiple ethnic and racial groups in the United States, particularly in the American West. See Scott Kurashige, *The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008) and Jose M. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

occurring at a larger scale have long been understood to affect those taking place at a smaller scale. It is important to recognize that local events can have a significant effect on national and international trends. While this is particularly visible in the history of Miami, it is by no means unique. American urban history is in dire need of greater integration into the transnational history that has long shaped it, but which has rarely been acknowledged. These connections were made all the stronger in Miami by the Cuban revolution, but the city's connection to larger trends long precedes it. Trends in the city's development and on the island of Cuba set the stage for an increasing embrace of Miami's identity as both an American city and a world city.

Miami's location, on the shores of Biscayne Bay in South Florida, served to give the city a unique character due to its proximity to the Caribbean Sea and to Cuba. In the decades after the city's founding in 1896, national and international tourism proved extremely important to Miami's boosters, who sought to make it a gateway to the Caribbean. There was, in the early twentieth century, a significant American infatuation with the island nation of Cuba. This desire for a connection with a foreign land that seemed both exotic and promising would play a significant part in determining the city's character and appearance. One scholar has gone as far as to suggest that Miami "was a product of the North American infatuation with Cuba in the 1920s," and bears the distinctive markings of these origins. Developers would often visit the island for ideas on architectural design, street names often mirrored locations in Cuba, and construction materials—including weathered roof tiles and fixtures previously used in Cuban buildings—were imported from Havana.[10] Miami, then, was not only a way station on the way

[10] Louis A. Pérez Jr., *On Becoming Cuban: Identity, Nationality, and Culture* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 432-433.

to Cuba, but a reproduction of the island's charms and promises on American soil. The connection to Cuba fueled the imagination of investors and vacationers and helped drive the real estate explosion in Dade County throughout the first half of the 1920s.

This proximity to the Caribbean also had a profound effect on the racial dynamics in the city. In some respects, these dynamics developed in a similar pattern to those in much of the American South. Throughout much of the twentieth century, African Americans in Miami lived in the city's congested Central Negro District, also known as Colored Town (and, in time, as Overtown), located "blocks from downtown but a world away from the beachfront where so many blacks worked."[11] African Americans in Miami were politically and economically exploited, and were often excluded from a significant share of public services. The city differed from the traditional model of American cities in the Jim Crow South through the significant presence of Bahamian blacks in the city. While this immigrant population helped the city's early economic development by providing a labor pool for domestic service, tourism, and agriculture, it did so within a tourist based economy that facilitated the emergence of a white power structure that directly benefited from and controlled this labor force. The Bahamians, however, were not accustomed to the racial bigotry of the American South and were seen by white elites as a liability in relation to African Americans in the city. Some of the immigrants defended themselves far more vigorously than did native born blacks and used their British citizenship as

[11] N.D.B. Connolly, "Sunbelt Civil Rights: Urban Renewal and the Follies of Desegregation in Greater Miami," in *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place, and Region*, ed. Michelle Nickerson and Darren Dochuk (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 165.

protection against racial attacks. Ultimately, the inclusion of English-speaking Caribbean blacks "intensified Miami's hostile climate and hardened racial lines."[12]

By the early 1950s, the evolution of Greater Miami was following a pattern that would benefit the exiles that started arriving by the end of the decade. The Miami metropolitan area consisted of the city of Miami and twenty-five suburban municipalities. The central city was growing at a much slower rate than the periphery as, despite the best efforts of the city's boosters, a pattern of economic decentralization followed when the surrounding suburban municipalities sought to entice commercial and industrial establishments away from the city.[13] By the time the Cuban migration to South Florida began, the loss of jobs in the central city had led to a recession and an economic environment that undermined the previous diversification of the city's economy. The Cuban exiles were moving into an environment in which 62% of the city's population was dependent on seasonal tourism for part or all of their income.[14]

The depopulation of Miami proper was further exacerbated by the embrace of urban renewal schemes by liberal politicians in South Florida. Self-styled racial progressives sought to tackle the symbolic and material ills of Jim Crow segregation in the decades after the Second World War through slum clearance and urban renewal. They sought to unmake Jim Crow at the spatial level by democratizing Americans' access to suburban real estate and weakening the

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[12] Chanelle N. Rose, "Tourism and the Hispanicization of Race in Jim Crow Miami, 1945-1965," *Journal of Social History 45*, no. 3 (2012), 737.

[13] Raymond A. Mohl, "Miami: The Ethnic Cauldron," in *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II*, eds. Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 62-63. In 1960 the *Herald* reported that the growth Dade's suburban areas had "rocketed to the nation's top at 158 per cent." "Metro Government: What it Costs… And Will Cost... And Why," *Miami Herald*, October 18, 1960.

[14] This figure provided by Robert King High, mayor of Miami, in testimony before Congress. See Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees*, 87th Cong., 1st sess., 1961, 44. The changes in seasonal employment were significant enough that the month of May, 1959 saw an increase in unemployment benefits paid in Greater Miami from $57,053 to $428,163. See Dom Bonafede, "Miami's Jobless Roll Up," *Miami Herald*, June 12, 1959.

property rights of urban landlords.[15] This course of action was supported by the *Miami Herald,* which described slums and blighted areas as "Florida's Shame," and declared that "Urban Renewal should be an article of hope and faith" in the state's future.[16] In effect, however, the practice of utilizing eminent domain legislation to carry out slum clearing and urban renewal projects served to raze black rental housing and to liquidate black homes.[17] In spatial terms, the elimination of black housing in the Central Negro District led to an African American migration from the central city to unincorporated areas that would come to be known as Liberty City, a more suburban environment north of Allapattah.[18] Just as many of the city's white inhabitants were following the migration of jobs to the suburban municipalities, African Americans were also moving out of the central city, creating a space for the incoming waves of Cuban immigrants.

Circumstances in Miami would have mattered little if there were not pre-existing links between Cubans and the state of Florida. Well before the 1959 revolution, before the Spanish-American War in 1898, and before Miami's incorporation in 1896, émigrés and tourists from the island of Cuba had already established relationships with towns and cities in Florida. The proximity to Florida made it a convenient destination for both business and leisure, establishing a pattern of Cuban business interests in the area that preceded the expanded American presence in Cuba following their independence from Spain. The U.S. involvement in Cuba would be significant in establishing a business community whose members were prepared for an American business environment based on their interactions with American businessmen, missionaries, and corporations in their home country.

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[15] See Connolly, "Sunbelt Civil Rights," 164-187 for a full discussion of this process.
[16] "Urban Renewal Is Our Hope," *Miami Herald*, April 4, 1959.
[17] Connolly, "Sunbelt Civil Rights," 171.
[18] *Ibid*, 165.

The development of this business class was directly tied to the circumstances through which an independent Cuba came to be. Much has been written on the Cuban independence movement, the Spanish American War, and the weakening of the new Cuban nation's sovereignty by the United States through legal machinations like the Platt Amendment and other political, military, and economic pressures brought to bear on a long line of Cuban governments.[19] These events were crucial to Cuba's development throughout the twentieth century and to the circumstances that brought about the Cuban revolution in the late 1950s, but they were particularly important to the story of Miami after the revolution as far as they explain the adaptability of the exiles to their new circumstances. While there are clear continuities between the political traditions of Cuba in the first half of the twentieth century and the political affiliations of different exile groups after the revolution, the disruptive nature of revolution and the Cuban diaspora served to re-shape Cuban politics. In this new, transnational political landscape, the history of American intervention remained crucial to the mythology of the Cuban revolution, but became muted to those exiles who constructed idealized Cubas, both of the past and of a post-Castro future, in their minds. Their outlooks were informed by the more recent past and their conflict with the Castro regime.

The American presence in Cuba following the War of Independence was significant in creating an environment that shaped the professional classes that formed a significant portion

[19] For more detailed discussions and different perspectives of the long history of Cuba-U.S. relations see, among others, Louis Pérez Jr., *On Becoming Cuban*, and *Cuba In the American Imagination: Metaphor and the Imperial Ethos* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), Esteban Morales Dominguez and Gary Prevost, *United States-Cuban Relations: A Critical History* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), José M. Hernández, *Cuba and the United States: Intervention and Militarism, 1868-1933* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), Jules R. Benjamin, *The United States and the Origins of the Cuban Revolution: An Empire of Liberty in an Age of National Liberation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), and Lester D. Langley, *The Cuban Policy of the United States: A Brief History* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1968).

of the early waves of migration. Decades of conflict with the Spanish had already taken a heavy human and economic toll on the island of Cuba. The US entered this devastation in the wake of the war, and using the vast resources at its disposal, learned early "to exact Cuban acquiescence to their needs. Even the distribution of food to the hungry served as a means of social control."[20] The Americans saw themselves as civilizers who had fought a war on behalf of Cuba, a war whose very name robbed the Cuban's of any participation or agency, and whose victory gave them the moral authority to remake Cuba in their own image and for their own interests.[21]

As Louis Pérez Jr points out, however, the larger significance of the American intervention and their consequences had less to do with political relationships than with social realignments. The material impoverishment of the Cubans in 1898 facilitated the introduction of the Americans' "accumulated technical knowledge, advance industrial systems, new machinery, capital flows, new business organizations, and modern building innovations, all of which came loaded with meanings and metaphors as well as models of identity and modes of self-representation."[22] U.S. business models were ingrained in the post-colonial landscape as a new system flooded all levels of Cuban enterprise and commerce as with American entrepreneurs and corporations serving as agents, suppliers, supervisors, and investors. American business concerns established deep roots in Cuba by taking advantage of the devastation of the postwar and they helped establish new economic and social systems that helped to set the stage for both early exile adaptability and the familiarity of many Cubans with the city of Miami by the start of the Cuban diaspora.

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[20] Pérez Jr., *On Becoming Cuban*, 105.
[21] Pérez, *Cuba In the American Imagination*, 176-178.
[22] Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 115.

In the decades following the end of the colonial period, the development of the Cuban market—and the American presence in that market—was significant in shaping a new Cuban identity. Cubans sought to establish a clear standard for what it meant to be a modern Cuban, but these definitions developed in an environment that embraced American business models and connections. The sophistication of Havana's finance community, for example, was often held well above its counterparts in other Latin American countries and, at times, their counterparts in certain parts of the United States. Carlos Arboleya, a prominent exile who would eventually become vice-chairman of South Florida Barnett Bank, remembers that the experience he had gained working for Citibank and the Banco Continental Cubano made him more experienced than many in Miami's established banking communities. He recalled that upon finding his first banking job in Miami, the bank he was employed at "did not even know how to issue a letter of credit. I was the one who showed that bank how to issue letters of credit."[23] Arboleya was effusive about the state of Cuba's banking industry before the revolution, stating that it was not on the same level as New York's banking enclave, but was on a corresponding level with the rest of the United States. While these recollections were certainly tinged by the trauma of revolution and exile, and by a nostalgia for a Cuba that no longer exists, they suggest that Havana's exposure to international business and the heavy investment of American corporations prepared many Cubans to operate in a much more vibrant business environment than that which already existed in Miami—one that they would have to help build.

By the 1950s, Miami held special significance for both exiles and well-to-do Cubans. While Miami would be cemented as a city of exiles in the aftermath of the Cuban revolution, throughout the 1930s, the 1940s, and especially the 1950s, South Florida served as a haven for

[23] Carlos Arboleya, interview by Julio Estorino, August 17, 2010, Cuban Heritage Collection Luis J. Botifoll Oral History Project, CHC.

former office holders and political radicals seeking to bring change to Cuba. The city attracted more Cubans than those who actively sought revolution or to avoid the political upheavals at home; it also served as a natural tourist destination for many in the upper and middle classes of Cuban society. Miami "entered the Cuban consciousness as a place of refuge and residence: it was readily accessible, the cost of living was reasonable, and most of all it was vaguely familiar."[24] The proximity to Cuba and low cost of living were clearly important, but the familiarity with Miami stemmed from more than the Spanish and Cuban affectations of the city's street names and architecture. This familiarity also stemmed from the way in which the American presence in Cuba had transmitted certain cultural forms. Pérez suggests that the influence of American cultural forms in post-colonial Cuba created a self-definition of a Cuban-American identity which predated the Cuban diaspora. The cultural impact of the American presence created in many Cubans a significant pro-American feeling, and the United States in general—and Miami in particular—came to represent a temporary haven for Cuban tourists as violence once again took hold of their country in the late 1950s.[25]

The city's image as a welcoming refuge for Latin American visitors and business was also enhanced by certain conscious decisions made by Miami's government and civic organizations. Miami's boosters had long envisioned the city as a Pan-American metropolis, but in the years following the Second World War organizations like the Miami Chamber of Commerce sought to promote the city as the "Gateway to the Americas."[26] These efforts included promotional tours throughout Latin America, Spanish language tourist literature on Miami and Miami Beach, and a radio program entitled "Saludos de Miami," which sought to educate Latin American and

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[24] Pérez, *On Becoming Cuban*, 434.
[25] *Ibid*, 431-432.
[26] Rose, "Tourism and the Hispanicization of Race in Jim Crow Miami, 1945-1965," 739.

Caribbean audiences on the public services available in Miami for Spanish speakers.[27] This welcoming attitude toward Latin American visitors was intended to bolster Miami's already significant tourist industry. In doing so, however, Miami's business elites challenged the existing system of Jim Crow segregation present in the city as it was throughout the South. In a city that still had separate accommodations for whites and blacks both in public spaces and in businesses, Latin American visitors were not as clearly racialized as they might have been elsewhere. Latin American visitors, even very dark skinned visitors, were provided with exceptions to the prevalent structures of race in the city. As Channelle N. Rose points out, this not only demonstrates a greater complexity in the racial politics of American cities than has been allowed by the traditional white/black binary, but it also set Miami apart from other places through the "'honorary' white status afforded to some Spanish-speakers, particularly Cubans."[28] This acceptance was significant not only because it further identified Miami as a refuge in dark times for those Cubans affluent enough to visit the city as tourists, but because of its long-term implications. While the "honorary whiteness" Rose describes was intended to affect individuals and groups who were only visiting Miami, this transient access to racial privilege set an important precedent that would later be tested as droves of Cubans arrived at the city's international airport not for week-long vacations, but for periods of exile without a guaranteed end.

The effects of the conflict in Cuba would test the patience of Miami's government and its citizens even before the defeat of the Batista regime. With a small, but impassioned, Cuban community in the city, it was only a matter of time until the conflict and violence gripping the island followed Cuban tourists and exiles onto the streets of Miami. Pro and anti-Batista

[27] *Ibid*, 740-741.
[28] *Ibid*, 746.

factions existed in South Florida and often clashed on the streets of Miami. As *Miami Herald* reporter James Buchanan would later recall, "during the two years of Castro's revolution[…]gun-runners opened fire on would-be hijackers; street attacks were frequent, and Cuban officials in Miami were beaten."[29] This last trend caused particular consternation for Batista's government and headaches for the Miami officials and boosters who sought to sell their city internationally. Rodolfo Masferrer, a member of the Cuban House of Representatives, was beaten by anti-Batista Cubans at the Miami airport. This incident and the earlier beating of his son in the city caused the Mayor of Havana to denunciate the city of Miami and threaten its economic viability by announcing that Cubans had spent $400 million in Miami in 1957, but in the future they would spend that money elsewhere. [30] The furor surrounding these incidents forced Florida Governor Leroy Collins to apologize for the Masferrer incident and to pledge to detain those responsible.[31]

Despite the best effort of state and local officials to dispel an image of lawlessness and violence, Miami was now fully engrossed in Cuba's conflict. The Cuban House of Representatives criticized the city's government for being unable or unwilling to stop pro-Castro exiles that were operating "without difficulty in Miami, a center of the violent internal struggle [in Cuba]."[32] The Batista government identified Miami as a destination for those seeking to instigate conflict on the island. The violence in Miami was not only an extension of a homeland conflict carried out by exiles and émigrés in a foreign city, but also an appropriation of an American city as a central location for the violence in Cuba. As arms shipments, smugglers, and

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[29] James Buchanan, "Miami the Casablanca of Caribbean," *Miami Herald*, July 20, 1959.
[30] Thomas G. Patterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 147.
[31] *Ibid*.
[32] "Cubans Criticize Miami," *New York Times*, April 21, 1958.

expeditionary forces continued to be seized and arrested in and around Miami, local officials grew increasingly worried about the escalating violence.[33] They were rightfully concerned. Their ability to deal with the encroachment of a transnational conflict into South Florida depended on the limited powers of city, county, and state government. Local law enforcement could crack down on street conflicts and coordinate with federal authorities to seize arms shipments, but its reach was limited. Cuban citizens often avoided prosecution by leaving the country. In July of 1959, for example, Cuban Consul Alonso Hidalgo boarded a plane headed for Havana in order to avoid being tried for inciting a riot.[34] The government in Cuba had changed, but the conflict persisted both on the island and in Miami. While violent clashes and plotting would continue to tax the power and reach of law enforcement in South Florida after Castro's victory in Cuba, a greater challenge to state and local government would come as the size of the exile population grew. Miami's government and its citizens would soon face the impact of a massive transnational migration into an area unprepared to face the challenge alone.

The three and a half decades following the Cuban Revolution brought about wide ranging changes to Miami and created a powerful new group in South Florida and in American politics. Neither this evolution nor the unprecedented welcome from the federal government that drove it were inevitable. Significant work has been done on the Cuban American

[33] Examples of these arrests and seizures include the capture of a truck loaded with arms and ammunitions valued at $50,000, the arrest of three pro-Castro individuals holding $3,000 worth of weapons at a seaplane base in Miami, and the capture of 31 heavily armed men headed for Cuba north of Miami. See "Miami Unit Reports a Landing," *New York Times*, April 7, 1958, "Three Arrested in Miami," *New York Times*, May 24, 1958, and "Heavily Armed Force of 31 Seized Off Florida on Boat Bound for Cuba," *New York Times*, September 11, 1958.

[34] John Morton and Al Finkelstein, "Cuban Consul Flees Miami Riot Charges," *Miami Herald*, July 7, 1959.

community by sociologists, political scientists, and scholars in other disciplines.[35] Some of these works, however, take the privileged position of the Cuban refugees in relation to the federal government as a given, without fully exploring the historical circumstances that determined this relationship. In the chapters that follow, the origins, processes, and consequences of this evolution are chronicled from the revolutions immediate aftermath in 1959 to the formal end of the rafter crisis in 1995. Chapter 1 chronicles the first two years of the Cuban refugee crisis, the reaction by local government officials and civic leaders, how these officials and leaders framed the refugee influx in terms of the international Cold War, and the early reaction by the Eisenhower administration. Chapter 2 describes the implementation of and motivations for a large-scale federal response to the exile influx headed by the Cuban Refugee Program and analyses its effects on Miami's economy. Chapter 3 follows the evolution of Cuban exile politics, from the relationship of exile organizations with the federal government to the reactions by Miami's black and white communities to their presence in South Florida.

The period following the end of the direct flights from Cuba to the United States in 1973 and before the start of the Mariel boatlift of 1980 serves as the setting for Chapter 4. The Cuban American community worked to consolidate the economic and political gains they had accrued in South Florida, while they wrestled with internal conflicts over whether to open a dialogue with Castro's regime. The Mariel boatlift is the central event of Chapter 5. Mariel presented a fundamental challenge to federal authorities, to other groups in Miami, and to the Cuban American community as some 125,000 Cuban refugees came to the United State in the

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[35] See, for example, Alex Stepick et al., *This Land is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), Guillermo J. Grenier and Lisandro Pérez, *The Legacy of Exile: Cubans in the United States*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003), Maria de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), and Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

span of a few months. The political problems associated with Mariel drove the creation of a powerful Cuban American lobby. Chapter 6 describes the rise of this lobby, the extent of the Cuban American community's political power, and the limits of that power in the waning years of the Cold War.

For decades, Miami has been treated as an outlier to the larger American urban experience. Miami's Cuban community makes its differences from other cities quite clear. These differences also serve to obfuscate our understanding of Miami as a city whose underlying structures fit well within the Sunbelt synthesis. An analysis of Miami's history in the wake of the Cuban revolution serves to reveal the structures that shape the multicultural cities of the United States in the postwar period. It is simply a matter of correctly identifying the multicultural trends present not only in obvious urban environments like Miami, but far and wide throughout the United States.

# CHAPTER 1—"OUR UNNOTICED NEIGHBORS": CUBAN EXILES, COMMUNITY ACTION, AND THE PUSH FOR A FEDERAL RESPONSE

On July 4, 1959, a group of Cubans sympathetic to Fidel Castro's revolution gathered near Bayfront Park in downtown Miami to participate in a "Cuba-U.S. friendship parade." Members of this group, including Cuban Consul Alonso Hidalgo, later reported that the parade was interrupted by a small group loyal to Fulgencio Batista, which erupted onto the scene in a car and proceeded to snatch a Cuban flag from the hands of a young girl. This provocation enraged many of the parade's participants, making them give chase to the provocateurs. The pursuit ended at the home of Batista-era Senator Rolando Masferrer at 1105 SW 2nd Ave, where over fifty anti-Castro Cubans were gathered.[1] Another report, signed by more than a dozen Miami police officers, suggested the fault of what transpired lay with Hidalgo. "Disheveled and almost incoherent with rage," Hidalgo arrived on the scene of a minor clash between a pro-Castro group and the anti-Castro group gathered for what they called a "Catholic Anti-Communist" rally, and started shouting encouragement at the pro-Castro crowd.[2] Hidalgo's actions caused the anti-Castro group to surge out of Masferrer's home intending to trounce the consul. Regardless of how the disturbance actually started, the end result was the same—a force of 45 police officers on motorcycles, radio cars and paddy wagons were called to the scene

[1] Tom Lownes, "U.S. Given Details of Cuban Riot Here," *Miami Herald*, July 8, 1959.
[2] John Morton and Al Finkelstein, "Cuban Consul Flees Miami Riot Charges," *Miami Herald*, July 7, 1959.

to stop an estimated 200 Cubans engaged in a street brawl on the intersection of SW Second Avenue and 11th St.[3]

This clash was just the latest in a series of incidents occurring in and around the city of Miami. In the months preceding the incident, the *Miami Herald* had published reports of verbal and physical confrontations between Cuban groups, of the international intrigue related to the agents of several Caribbean nations in South Florida, and of the arms trade flowing through the city. This mounting strife finally led *Herald* staff writer James Buchanan to declare in the weeks following the near-riot that his city would become a destination for exiles fleeing for their lives and a hub for their political activities. When Buchanan considered the possibility of the violence and intrigue of the Caribbean spilling onto the streets of the city, he compared the situation to similar occurrences in recent memory asking, "is Miami to be more of a Latin American battleground than it was during Castro's Cuban revolution?"[4] His readers had already lived through a period of clashes between Cuban factions when the city had served as a staging ground for pro-Castro groups. Buchanan expected that this current round of strife would be worse as the number of exiles in the city continued to grow. He noted that during the three weeks between June 22 and July 13, 103 new exiles had arrived in South Florida. This number would be dwarfed by the scale of the refugee arrivals in later years, but the article suggested that a few hundred agitators on either side would propagandize the estimated mass of 25,000-30,000 "neutral" Cubans in the city, threatening further unrest. The question was whether or not the violence that had largely abated in Cuba would become the new reality for South Florida.

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[3] Al Finkelstein and Eddie Gong, "Riot Squad Quells Cuban Mix," *Miami Herald*, July 5, 1959.
[4] James Buchanan, "Miami the Casablanca of Caribbean," *Miami Herald*, July 20, 1959.

The Cuban migration to South Florida in the first two years after Castro's victory and its effects spurred local individuals and institutions to action as they sought help to alleviate the migratory crisis affecting their city. While Miami's established Cuban community was extremely successful in incorporating the first arrivals with the aid of local charitable organizations, the scope of the humanitarian crisis created by the Cuban refugee presence proved too taxing for the city's local resources in these early years and drove the calls for federal involvement. The first encounters between the refugees, local civic and religious groups, and federal authorities set the stage for a larger federal intervention and had long term effects in shaping this effort.

Father Bryan O. Walsh often thought back to New Year's Day, 1959 and recalled how it changed his life. On that day, the tall, redheaded Irish priest saw multiple displays of jubilation on the streets of Miami as the news of the fall of Fulgencio Batista swept through the city. He watched as car-loads of Cuban exiles drove around Dupont Plaza and Biscayne Boulevard, excitedly celebrating the news from Cuba.[5] The jubilation felt by those Miami Cubans who had long sought an end to Batista's regime was palpable, but their numbers were still relatively small in relation to the total population of Miami. The day would pass without incident for Walsh, but it would mark the beginning of a pattern of Cuban immigration to South Florida that would fundamentally change the face of the area. Like other residents of Miami, Walsh observed the festivities unaware of the massive changes that were to come for the city and of the humanitarian crisis that would involve him, as director of Catholic Charities, in the affairs of the city's Cuban population for the rest of his life.

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[5] Bryan O. Walsh, "Castro or No Castro, Miami Would Be Hispanic," 1983, Folder *Castro or No Castro, Miami Would be Hispanic, 1983*, Box 39, Series III, Bryan O. Walsh Papers, Barry University, Miami, FL (hereafter cited as Walsh Papers).

The 28 year-old Walsh had immigrated to the United States from Ireland less than ten years before. He had been ordained to the priesthood in St. Augustine, FL on May 23rd, 1954 and had been appointed Diocesan Director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of St. Augustine and Executive Director of the Miami Catholic Welfare Bureau in February of 1958.[6] In August of that same year, Walsh, along with the rest of South Florida's Catholic community, had witnessed the creation of a new diocese with Miami as its See city and headed by Coleman F. Carroll, the former Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. As the first new diocese in Florida in 88 years, it represented a significant change for Catholicism in the state.[7] While this new diocese was being constructed around a city with well-established Hispanic populations, the Catholic Church in South Florida was for the most part middle class, suburban, and at least 95% English speaking and white.[8] Bishop Carroll sought to embrace those Catholics in the area being underserved by the church's focus on white suburbanites. Under Carroll's leadership, Spanish speaking priests were brought to South Florida and, in November of 1958, the church opened the Centro Hispanic Catolico, a new agency under the Catholic Welfare Bureau tasked with dealing with the needs of Spanish speaking new arrivals in the city.[9] The creation of the Centro was fortuitously timed, as a slow but steady stream of Cuban exiles had begun to pour into Miami.

The appearance of these exiles in Miami led to the publication of a several sensationalistic newspaper articles highlighting the individual stories of formerly high ranking

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[6] "Background Information on Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh," 1962, Folder Biographical Information, 1956-2001, Box 1, Series I, Walsh Papers.
[7] Bryan O, Walsh, "Reflections on the Evolution of a Multicultural Church, 1958-1991," 1991, Folder Reflections on the Evolution of a Multicultural Church, 1958-1991, Box 44, Series III, Walsh Papers.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Walsh, "Castro or No Castro, Miami Would Be Hispanic," Walsh Papers.

members of the regime now hiding from Castro in South Florida.[10] The permanence of these refugees in the United States was not assured early on. When Rolando Masferrer and several of his associates fled Havana in his private yacht on January 1 and set sail for Key West, they were detained upon arrival. Some of the passengers were granted asylum by immigration officials, others flew back to Havana, and a group including Masferrer was transferred to a detention center in McAllen, Texas, where they were held until they were released on parole on January 27.[11] Within a day, Masferrer had made his way to Miami with his brothers Rodolfo and Raimundo and was joking to reporters that he might return to Cuba within a year or two, once Castro cleaned up and had a shave.[12] The former senator and newspaper editor would go into hiding in the weeks that followed, living in a "shabby rented house on the fringe of a Negro section of Miami," all the while issuing denials to the press regarding the Cuban government's charge that he had stolen $17,000,000 when he fled the country.[13] Fulgencio's brother, Francisco Batista, was also reported to live in Hialeah and to have opened a business with his son Juan.[14] The presence of Batista associates like Masferrer and Francisco Batista made some speculate on whether the ousted despot would leave the Dominican Republic and seek refuge in the United States. This led the *Herald* to pose the question of whether or not Batista and other

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[10] The *Herald* reported, for example, a bizarre story about a home invasion perpetrated against Cuban actress Marisol Vasquez, who had been accused by Castro sympathizers of being a Batista spy. Other notes included the See Gene Miller, "2 Gunmen Invade Home, Rob Batista's 'Mata Hari,'" *Miami Herald*, February 4, 1959.

[11] "Cuban Exile Group is on Parole in U.S.," *New York Times*, January 28, 1959.

[12] James Buchanan, "Castro's No. 2 Foe Hides Here," *Miami Herald*, January 29, 1959.

[13] Masferrer was seemingly right to stay in hiding as a few weeks later Miami law enforcement received intelligence that Castro agents were in South Florida to kidnap the former senator and take him back to Cuba. See George Southworth, "Most Wanted Cuban Hides in Poverty Here," *Miami Herald*, February 22, 1959, and Southworth, "Castro Agents Here to 'Get' Batista Aides?," *Miami Herald*, Sunday, April 5, 1959.

[14] George Southworth, "Batista's Brother Comes Here; Opens a Business in Hialeah," *Miami Herald*, March 26, 1959.

Latin American strongmen should be allowed into the country: "Should the U.S. grant political asylum to deposed dictators?"[15]

Miami was not an obvious destination for many Batista supporters. Many members of the Batista regime or those closely associated with it avoided entering the United States through Miami because of the strong support Castro had in the city.[16] The pro-Castro tendency in the city was weakened by the arrival of each new flight from Cuba. The very planes which brought Batista supporters would often return to the island filled with Cubans who had been exiled by the former dictator and now returned home with the expectation of a fresh start.[17] The early exiles made their presence known through their activism and their involvement in their new community. By March of 1959, the first newspaper with an anti-Castro perspective, *Tribuna*, was established by exiles suspected of being financed by "Batista sources."[18] Upon settling in the city, these early exiles began to organize and meet at anti-Castro events, such as the one held in Masferer's home. The activism of these first exiles served to foster political unrest and clashes like the July 4th riot. Observers were concerned about the exile presence because of the clashes between anti- and pro-Castro groups and because of the exile influence on the established Cuban community in Miami, not because of their numbers and their extended presence in the city.

The exact number of refugees that sought to make their home in South Florida during this time period is difficult to ascertain. By the end of June, 1959 District Immigration Director

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[15] John B. McDermott, "Should U.S. Be Haven for Dictators?," *Miami Herald*, April 5, 1959.
[16] Bryan O. Walsh, "Cubans 84," 1984, Folder Cubans 84 Institute of Cuban Studies (UM), Miami, Fla. 3 Aug. 1984, Box 41, Series III, Walsh Papers.
[17] Bryan O. Walsh, "Cubans in Miami—The Factual Story," 1966, Folder Cubans 1960-2000, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.
[18] James Buchanan, "Anti-Castro Newspaper Pops Up in Miami Area," *Miami Herald*, March 8, 1959.

Edward P. Ahrens estimated that the number of exiles in the city had reached 500.[19] This number, however, was obscured by the lack of consistency in federal policy regarding Cuban entry and registration in the United States. The federal government, under Dwight D. Eisenhower, established an open-door policy for Cubans migrating to the United States. As relations with the Castro government deteriorated, a heavy flow of temporary refugees would serve to discredit the new regime in the eyes of the world.[20] What immigration officials failed to establish, believing the situation to be transient, was a system by which the entry of these Cubans could be accurately monitored and quantified. Without such a system, the traditional flow of tourists and visitors between Florida and Cuba obscured the precise scope of the migration as very few of the Cubans entering the United States at this time sought the designation of political refugee.[21]

A majority of those who made their new home in South Florida entered the country on B-2 tourist visas. The relative ease with which Cubans could exit their own country and enter the United States served to increase the number of exiles as the months went by and Castro consolidated his power on the island. This consolidation made many Cubans even more adamant about using a tourist visa to enter the United States. As one local resident observed in a letter to South Florida congressman Dante B. Fascell, many Cubans reasoned—rightly or not—that upon becoming officially designated as exiles, their remaining family in Cuba would be put

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[19] Arthur Johnsey, "Batistan Exiles Hit 500," *Miami Herald*, June 30, 1959.

[20] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 109.

[21] While the flow and tourists back and forth between Cuba and the United states would quickly be affected by the deteriorating relations between the two nations, the early months of 1959 saw attempts by the Cuban tourist industry to reassure American tourists they were still welcome on the island. An ad for the Havana Riviera Hotel featured maracas and tropical dancers and declared "Everything's fine and fun again in Havana!" A full page ad taken out by several hotels, including the Habana Hilton, the Tropicana, and the Varadero Internacional told readers "It's a pleasure now to come to Cuba!" See "Everything's Fine and Fun Again in Havana!," *Miami Herald*, February 1, 1959 and "It's a Pleasure Now to Come to Cuba," *Miami Herald*, February 21, 1959.

in jeopardy and any possessions left behind would immediately be seized by the Castro government. He also reported that by August of 1960, there were about 4,000 Cubans that had adopted official political refugee status in Miami, but that this number was dwarfed by the ill-defined mass of Cubans that remained in South Florida on tourist visas. [22]

By the end of October 1960, the number of "visitors" who had entered the United States using tourist visas and resided in the Miami area as exiles was estimated in an official report as 30,000. The estimate would grow to 33,000 by the end of the year.[23] At the end of October, the number of Cubans who had specifically requested political asylum or who had stayed in the United States for over a year on a tourist visa and were now requesting work permits, numbered about 7,500. By December 31, the growing figure had more than doubled to 15,600.[24] Concerns about conflict among the different groups of Cubans in South Florida did not disappear, but their prominence in the minds of Miamians gave way to growing concerns over what, by the fall of 1960, was a full-blown humanitarian crisis.

Several factors served to mask or ameliorate the effects of the developing migratory crisis prior to the fall of 1960. The wealth of many of the early exiles, the more relaxed restrictions by the Cuban government regarding the funds that could be removed from the island, the support of the local Cuban community, and the aid provided by local civic and religious organizations prevented the city from being overwhelmed with the needs of the growing exile community. The city's history of hosting Cuban exiles and the significant number

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[22] Edward Lustgarten, letter to Dante B. Fascell, August 29, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, Dante B. Fascell Congressional Papers, 1955-1993, University of Miami Special Collections, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL (Hereafter cited as DBF Papers).

[23] Tracy S. Voorhees, "Report to the President of the United States on the Cuban Refugee Problem," 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Reports—TSV Final of Jan 18 1961, Box P, Tracy S. Voorhees Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (Cited hereafter as Voorhees Papers).

[24] *Ibid*.

of Latin American tourists that visited the city each year, made the growing presence of the Cubans less disruptive to everyday life than it might have been in other areas. As the months went by, however, the economic and social needs of the refugees began to tax existing support structures. The sheer number of Cubans became disruptive even for residents of an "inter-American" city. State and local governments managed the crisis as best they could with the aid of civic and religious groups, but the growing problem forced them to call on the federal government for help.

While some exiles had to flee Cuba with little or no money, and others, like Masferrer, were accused of stealing large sums from the country, a portion of the early exiles were able to bring significant resources with them. Federal Housing Administration officials estimated that 10,000 of the 30,000 exiles had been able to leave Cuba with significant funds and had reportedly been using those resources to purchase homes in the Miami area, paying for these dwellings in cash.[25] These Cubans with resources also made their presence known through the actions of South Florida law firms acting on their behalf. In late 1960, for example, a rumor spread among Miami's Cubans that an outbreak of hostilities was imminent and that it would lead to the assets of Cuban nationals being frozen by the U.S. government. Consequently, an attorney by the name of Nestor Morales informed Congressman Dante Fascell about this rumor and the effect it had in making panicked Cubans transfer their funds to Canadian and European banks. Morales warned that this rumor would have negative effects on Florida's economy "because it reduce[d] capital investments here."[26] Morales's predictions were dire enough that

[25] C.B. Sweet, letter to Norman P. Mason, December 27, 1960, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Misc., Box P, Voorhees Papers.
[26] Nestor Morales, letter to Dante B. Fascell, July 26, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.

Fascell immediately contacted the Department of State with them.[27] The rumors would persist, however, and would eventually lead the State Department to issue a statement reassuring exiles of means that their money was safe in American banks.[28]

Another group of exiles proved their affluence when they sought to regularize their immigration status. To do so, they paid into a lobbying scheme that would later be investigated by the Florida Bar Association for possible violations of ethics.[29] Attorneys Jack L. King and A.V. Bethencourt approached the Cuban exile community in Miami in mid-1960 with an offer to lobby the United States Congress for a bill that would grant permanent resident status to a specific group of exiles to be individually named in the piece of legislation. King ran advertisements for this scheme in the local Spanish language newspapers, while Bethencourt distributed a mimeographed letter among his Cuban clients explaining the plan. [30] Bethencourt's letter included a breakdown of prices for participation. Cubans were expected to pay $100 for an individual exile, $150 for a married couple, $200 for a married couple with a child under sixteen years of age, and $100 for each child over the age of sixteen.[31] King and Bethencourt were able to collect $18,000 and $3,200, respectively, from Cuban exiles and stated they were holding the money in special accounts, to be returned if the bill did not pass.[32] After collecting the fees, King and Bethencourt proceeded to lobby congress on the behalf of the nearly 500 Cubans who had made payments to them.

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[27] Dante B. Fascell, letter to William B. Macomber, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations at the Department of State, July 28, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.
[28] David Kraslow, "Cubans' Money 'Safe,'" *Miami Herald*, October 22, 1960.
[29] "Bar Looks Twice at Cubans' Legal Fees," *Miami News*, August 25, 1960.
[30] Juanita Greene, "How Cubans Pay $100 Each to Stay in the U.S.," *Miami Herald*, August 24, 1960.
[31] A.V. Bethencourt, open letter to Cuban clients, undated, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.
[32] "Got no Advance Fee, Attorney Declares," *Miami Herald*, September 1, 1960.

Between April and August of 1960, King inundated Dante Fascell and other members of Florida's congressional delegation with agitated correspondence.[33] In his letters, King pointed to problems faced by the Cuban exile community in trying to stabilize their status in the United States, but he made appeals specifically for his clients. Many of the Cubans listed in the private bill, he claimed, had families back in Cuba who would not be able to obtain any sort of entry visa into the United States because their father was in the United States as a political exile. King attempted to sway members of Congress by focusing on the angle of family reunification. "The situation being what it is in Cuba," he wrote, "no one can say how long these families will continue to be separated."[34] Fascell warned the attorney that the bill was unlikely to be brought before Congress, much less passed, as the Department of State and Immigration and Naturalization Services did not desire to "commit themselves with respect to legislation until they have had an opportunity to review the entire problem."[35]

Even as some Cubans sought permanence in the United States, there was a growing sentiment among the exiles that Castro's government could not last. They simply needed to wait for the revolution's inevitable collapse before returning home.[36] Former prime minister and former president of the Cuban Senate, Dr. Manuel Antonio de Varona, for example, predicted in early November, 1960 that there would be a "blood bath" in Cuba within 90 days as the people turned against Castro.[37] One federal official found this attitude quite different from

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[33] Jack L. King to Dante B. Fascell, April 28, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.
[34] Jack L. King to Dante B. Fascell, August 5, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.
[35] Dante B. Fascell to Jack L. King, August 23, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.
[36] This attitude has been seen as the definitive feature of this group. Sociologist Silvia Pedraza went so far as to label this first wave of exiles as "those who wait." "'Those who wait,'" Pedraza wrote, "characterized those first refugees who came imagining that exile would be temporary, waiting for the inevitable American reaction and aid to overcome Cuba's new government." See Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 79.
[37] George Southworth, "Cuban Predicts a Blood Bath," *Miami Herald*, November 2, 1960.

that of previous refugee populations, such as the refugees from the Hungarian revolution. "The Hungarians knew they could not go home and so they had to make their lives here for themselves," wrote Tracy Voorhees, who had worked with the Hungarian refugees and would be a special envoy to Miami for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, "whereas most of the Cubans were optimistic that circumstances in Cuba would change so that they could return to their homes."[38] While some Cubans sought to stabilize their status in the United States while still adhering to this belief, members of the United States government believed that taking such a step could have problematic implications on a symbolic level.

When Congressman Fascell forwarded King's letter to Francis E. Walter, Chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee and the House Subcommittee on the Judiciary with Special Jurisdiction over Immigration and Nationality, the latter responded with deep concern. He advised Fascell to hold fast against local pressures to pass such a bill because of the way King and his associates had collected the money from the Cuban community. Furthermore, he cautioned that to rush legislation granting permanent resident status to Cuban refugees "would imply that we consider the present situation in Cuba as a permanent one and that we see no hope of that situation changing so as to permit the people persecuted by Castro to return to their own country." He went on to write that many in Washington believed that it "would not be consistent with the national interest and foreign policy of the United States to permit that implication to arise."[39] Walter was not only rejecting passing a bill that would grant permanent resident status to some Cubans; he was rejecting the very idea of any piece of legislation that suggested that Castro's regime would have any permanence. For a staunch anti-communist like

[38] Tracy S. Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees," 1971, , Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Voorhees Papers.
[39]Francis E. Walter to Dante B. Fascell, August 23, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers.

Walter, and like-minded allies within the U.S. government, the humanitarian dimensions of the growing crisis in South Florida were secondary to the symbolic and practical implications of this crisis in the fight against Marxism in Latin America.

Not all Cubans could afford to lobby Congress. As time went on, more restrictions were put on the amount of currency Cubans were able to remove from the country when traveling to the United States. The Bank of Cuba established restrictions on the sale and removal of U.S. dollars from Cuban territory. It established that a Cuban citizen could, as a tourist, take $150 a year out of their country. Given that so many Cubans were emigrating from the island utilizing tourist visas, however, many of the exiles arriving in Miami reported that their requests for the $150 from the were usually denied under one pretext or another. For Cubans immigrating to the United States on resident visas, the amount they were allowed to carry upon leaving the island was five dollars.[40]

The exiles who arrived in the Miami area with five dollars or less to their name would often seek out family or friends among the established Cuban community in Miami. These personal ties proved life saving for many exiles. Because those who entered the United States on tourist visas could not legally seek out jobs in the Miami area, the help of established Cubans was crucial in feeding and housing much of the first wave of exiles. Wendell Rollason, of the Miami Inter-Affairs Commission, went so far as to report that the effects of the influx were somewhat delayed by the efforts of the Cubans who had settled in Miami before the revolution or soon thereafter.[41] Father Bryan Walsh echoed this assessment when he stated that the

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[40] Bryan O. Walsh, report to Bishop Coleman Carroll, December 6, 1960, Folder Cubans 1960-2000, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.

[41] Juanita Greene and E.V.W. Jones, "Dade's Cuban Exiles Hunt for Food, Work," *Miami Herald*, October 2, 1960.

resident Cuban colony "had done a commendable job of absorbing their compatriots into their homes and places of business."[42] The established Cubans could only do so much, however, in the face of the ever-growing numbers of new exiles arriving in South Florida every day.

Cubans who did not have any friends or family in Miami or who found the resources of their allies in the city taxed to a breaking point sought out help from familiar institutions. As Father Walsh explained to the National Council of Catholic Women Convention in 1966, "the Cuban turned to the Church for help."[43] As director of Catholic charities in Miami, Walsh was among the first to see the growing problems posed by the increased Cuban presence in the city. A growing number of exiles sought help at the recently created Centro Hispanico Catolico. Bishop Carroll's idea for a center to welcome and aid new Hispanic arrivals to Miami would be more important than ever as the exiles found themselves without work, shelter, or money in a foreign city. Walsh estimated that in the first two years of the exile, the Catholic Church provided some $200,000 in aid and services to refugees. Because of their migratory status, the exiles had no access to any services from the city or state except for emergency medical assistance. [44]

By October of 1960, Bishop Carroll reported to the press that Catholic charities had set up a bread line at a church on Miami Avenue that fed 300 exiles a day. The Diocese had also spent $75,000 to remodel a building at what had been the Gesu Parish School, on NE 2nd St. The church provided English classes, daycare services, and a clinic for the refugees, all with an

[42] Walsh, "Cubans in Miami—The Factual Story," 1966, Folder Cubans 1960-2000, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.
[43] Ibid.
[44] *Ibid*.

operational cost of $25,000 a year.[45] These expenditures would grow even faster by the end of 1960 as more exiles sought out their help. Between December 1960 and March 1, 1961 Catholic charities saw 1,653 patients at its medical clinic, provided assistance for 2,450 families, distributed 6,200 baskets of food, arranged emergency housing for 4,520 exiles, and helped provide hospital care for 512 exiles. The Diocese of Miami spent $197,065 on these services, nearly doubling their expenditures to date.[46]

The Catholic Church was not alone in trying to aid the exiles flowing into South Florida between 1959 and 1960. The organizations that joined it in this endeavor saw their resources taxed in similar ways. The Miami Latin Center, chaired by Reverend Dr. Harold Buell of the White Methodist Church served as a clearing house to bring employers together with exile jobseekers. In October of 1960, however, Buell warned that there were not enough jobs to go around. Similar efforts were undertaken by the Hotel Employees Union and the resort industry in Miami, who collaborated to open an office which found jobs for some 400 Cubans. Tony Farinas, a Cuban-born representative of the union, echoed Buell's statements when he declared that "the industry cannot absorb all who are in need."[47] While multiple agencies and organizations sought to help solve the problem, there was no coordination of efforts and their combined impact on the refugee situation was insufficient to deal with a problem on this scale.

The problem, the *Herald* suggested, was one of visibility. When the newspaper hosted a panel of community leaders including Bishop Carroll, Reverend Buell, Farinas, Welfare Planning Council president Dr. Franklin Williams, and Congressman Fascell, they sought to inform the

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[45] Juanita Greene and E.V.W. Jones, "Cubans in Exile, Who Can Help?," *Miami Herald*, October 2, 1960.
[46] Bryan O. Walsh, draft of speech prepared for Bishop Coleman Carroll, March 12, 1963, Folder Cubans 1960-2000, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.
[47] Greene and Jones, "Cubans in Exile, Who Can Help?," Miami Herald, October 2, 1960.

public in Miami of the growing problem with a population they called "our Unnoticed Neighbors."[48] These community leaders provided statistics and stories about the challenges presented by the refugee problem to the *Herald's* readers, but also a clear understanding of the origins of the problem and some prescient policy predictions. Carroll emphasized the uniqueness of the situation by declaring that Miami was "the first city in the U.S. to ever have a Communist state as a next door neighbor."[49] Franklin Williams, who also served as the vice-president of the University of Miami, agreed, calling it "a cold war problem," but he suggested that the federal government had specialists who could help: "someone who has worked in Palestine or with the Hungarians could help us to assess our situation and tell us how to plan."[50] The idea of resettling the exiles to other parts of the country was met with resistance from the panel. Unlike the refugees from the Hungarian Revolution, Farinas warned that the Cuban exiles would not go. "They're in a strange land and worried," he said, "and they want to stay near one another."[51] While the group discussed possible outside solutions and the possibility of assistance from such organizations as the Red Cross and the United Nations, Congressman Fascell warned that no outside agency would want to help Miami until information regarding the number of refugees in South Florida and the extent of their needs could be determined. Miami needed to define the problem and try to solve it.[52]

In the spirit of defining the problem and conveying its urgency, both to the people of Miami and to the world at large, *Herald* reporter Juanita Greene wrote a series of stories that illustrated the different situations and shared problems of the exiles in Miami. In a cheap

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[48] Greene and Jones, "Dade's Cuban Exiles Hunt for Food, Work," *Miami Herald*, October 2, 1960.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] Greene and Jones, "Cubans in Exile, Who Can Help?," Miami Herald, October 2, 1960.
[51] *Ibid*.
[52] Greene and Jones, "Dade's Cuban Exiles Hunt for Food, Work," *Miami Herald*, October 2, 1960.

duplex on NW 50th St., on the "fringe" between white and African American areas, Greene met the Bequer family. The husband, Napoleon, a former member of Castro's rebel army, had made a dramatic escape from Havana's Morro Castle prison with twenty other former officers in late 1960, and had soon been followed to the United States by his wife and children. The Bequers had managed to bring $200 to the United States—gifts from sympathetic friends in Cuba—and had received $100 from friends already in Miami upon arrival. This money had allowed them to obtain a place to live and some used furniture. Napoleon had, just days prior to the interview, obtained a part-time, temporary job as a rug cutter. It paid $1 an hour and had been given to him by his employer as a favor to a friend. Even with this economic uncertainty, Bequer considered himself lucky. While his job might have been temporary, he was still doing better than the father of Luis, the red-headed neighbor boy, who was visiting when Greene conducted her interview. Luis's father had been a lawyer in Oriente, but had no job in Miami. "They were a very wealthy family in Cuba," Mrs. Bequer told Greene, "now they have nothing."[53]

Not all exiles were able to live in single family dwellings like the Bequers. The refugee influx created a housing shortage that was also covered in The *Herald's* series. On NW 7th St. Greene found twenty-six Cuban men who had converted a house, a small cottage, and a garage on a single property into an impromptu barracks. Groups of single men would band together to rent a dwelling, sharing space and expenses. During the daytime the men would stack their mattresses together to be able to walk around in the house. Of the 26 men, only three had jobs, including Jose Lopez Legon, a 30 year old exile who worked part-time as a plumber's helper for $1.25 an hour. Once a day, one of the men would set two large pots on the house's stove and make rice and beans for the group: only meal the men would have until the following day. The

[53] Juanita Greene, "Cuba Refugees Cover Worry With a Smile," *Miami Herald*, November 28, 1960.

group from the 7th St. house had sought help from different organizations in Miami including the Centro Hispanico Catolico, which provided the group with $60.[54] These group dwellings served as a transitory living situation for single men or men who had come to the United States without their families. Once they found more stable situations, exiles would leave these barracks behind—but there would often be two men ready to take their place.

Greene then sought out an area of the city that was already a hub of exile activity. She referred to it as the "fringes of the city's core," because the name Little Havana was not yet common. "From downtown Miami," Greene explained to her readers, "it's only a few blocks to Cuba." The owners of the Cuban grocery stores told Greene of the hard times their customers were going through. One store owner spoke of a distinguished man who walked into his store and checked the prices of the merchandize. The man left the store and counted the change in his pocket. When the man returned and asked to buy two bananas, Joseph Mota, the business owner, gave him the fruit and some crackers for free. The man burst into tears, telling Mota he had never had to ask for help before. Another store owner told Greene about a woman who handed him a diamond ring, asking him if she could exchange it for groceries. She was not the first to offer jewelry for food. Pawn shops were also profiting from the influx of Cuban jewelry. Exiles forbidden from taking cash out of the country by the Castro government bought jewelry they could convert to American dollars in Miami, even if at a loss. It helped them survive while they sought out any available jobs. Some travelled out from their downtown neighborhoods as far as Hialeah in search for any sort of factory work that might pay $1.10-$1.50 an hour. Things were not so dire for all exiles, Greene admitted, as many had their jewelry, bank accounts, and

[54] Juanita Green, "26 Cubans Live On What 3 Earn," *Miami Herald*, November 29, 1960.

jobs in Miami. "But a walk down SW Eighth St. is all it takes," she concluded, "to convince the skeptic that Miami has a real refugee problem."[55]

Greene and the *Herald* editorial staff wanted to expose the refugee problem, and in doing so to spur state and, in particular, federal authorities into action. For nearly two years the problem had been left to local authorities and charity groups. The *Herald* took the stance that "unless state and federal officials recognize it as their problem, too, they will show themselves exceptionally short-sighted."[56] It argued that not only was the task of managing this refugee wave ill-suited to volunteer groups and municipal government, but the way in which these refugees were treated in the United States would resonate throughout Latin America. The exile problem was not simply an emergency for one tucked-away town; on the contrary, it was a problem with serious implications for Americans and American foreign policy as a whole. Even when the federal government began to show an awareness of the problem, the *Herald's* editorial board was dissatisfied with their response. "It is a disappointment," they declared, "that the federal government apparently still considers the Cuban refugee situation something we must handle on our own."[57] The *Herald* and those in the community who had sought to get the attention of the federal government were glad to have President Eisenhower appoint a special representative to determine the nature of the Miami situation. This representative, however, was just the kind of skeptic Greene derided in her articles.[58]

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[55] Juanita Greene, "Refugees Trading Jewelry for Food," *Miami Herald*, November 30, 1960.
[56] "Our Many-Sided Refugee Problem," Editorial, *Miami Herald*, October 13, 1960.
[57] "Refugees: A Federal Case," Editorial, *Miami Herald*, November 17, 1960.
[58] The man who the Eisenhower administration tapped to serve as the President's Personal Representative for Cuban Refugees, Tracy S. Voorhees, would, just a year later, highlight the importance of Greene's coverage of the exile situation. He credited the stimulus for the organization of a local lobbying group and for the appeal to the White House to a "campaign by the Miami Herald consisting of a series of byline articles by Juanita Green [sic], who had made a real study of the situation and had written it up in a way which stirred both the City of Miami and the Governor to action." See Tracy S. Voorhees,

In late September of 1960, a group of community leaders from the greater Miami area, including Bishop Carroll, Reverend Buell, and Franklin Williams, formed a committee which sought to determine the scope of the refugee problem and the possible avenues by which its effects could be ameliorated. In early October, the committee invited William Kirk, an expert on refugees, to come to Miami. Kirk was the director of International Social Service, an agency that had helped in resettling 35,000 Hungarian refugees throughout the United States. Before arriving in Miami, Kirk made it clear that the resettlement of Cubans to other areas would almost certainly be a significant part of any resolution to Miami's refugee problem. The city's resources would not be enough to handle the problem alone, which he likened to a natural disaster.[59] Kirk made a series of recommendations to the committee, including the creation of a centralized employment agency to help job-seeking Cubans.[60]

State and local authorities cooperated to create an employment center by November, but community leaders understood that Miami's economy could only accommodate a limited number of new workers in the short run, and that they would need help from the federal government.[61] In response to Kirk's findings and the expert's assertion that officials in Washington seemed largely unaware of Miami's refugee problem, the temporary committee became a permanent committee tasked with exerting pressure at the state and federal level in order to bring refugee aid to Miami. Miami's Mayor, Robert King High, joined the permanent

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"Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961," 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 2 Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct 1960 to February 1961 (Oct 1961), Box O, Voorhees Papers.

[59] Juanita Greene, "Expert in Refugees to Survey Miami," *Miami Herald*, October 4, 1960.

[60] Kirk also suggested that a legal aid program be established to keep Cubans from falling into the hands of predatory lawyers who billed themselves as "immigration experts," and that specialized housing be created for young single men that they might be kept out of trouble. See Juanita Greene, "Central Job Agency for Cuban Exiles Urged," *Miami Herald*, October 8, 1960.

[61] See John Boyles, "Florida Spurs Help for Jobless Cubans," Miami *Herald*, November 2, 1960, and Juanita Greene, "Refugee Employment Office to Open," *Miami Herald*, November 8, 1960.

committee and declared that the problems it faced were not simply those of one American city. High stated that because Miami was now the "bastion against communism," Washington needed to help the city immediately.[62]

On October 17, 1960, the chairman of the newly minted Cuban Refugee Committee, Ira Willard, sent a letter to President Eisenhower directly stating Dade County's need for help. The letter, which was also sent to Florida Governor Leroy Collins and to the members of the state's Congressional delegation, echoed High's rationale regarding the federal government's obligation. "Our community has become a 'front-line' in the cold war tactics of the Communist world, and a point of first asylum for those Cubans who find their present regime intolerable," Willard explained to the president. The letter estimated the number of official refugees in South Florida at 4,500, but it also speculated that some 20,000 exiles were in the area on tourist visas. Willard's missive applauded the Cubans even as it requested aid to stem the drain on resources they had become. The problem, as Willard saw it, was not in the refugees themselves but in the very scale of the crisis; it simply dwarfed the capabilities of a single city and its people. "By its nature," he wrote, "the problem is one that demands the attention of the national government and that our community alone must not attempt to deal with it as a purely local situation." He urgently entreated President Eisenhower to assign federal officials to travel to Miami so they could clearly determine the extent of the problem and direct the aid the refugees and the community so desperately needed. The eyes of the world were on Miami. Willard warned Eisenhower that any action taken in Miami to resolve the situation would have "implications or repercussions abroad affecting our entire nation, for good or ill."[63]

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[62] Juanita Greene, "New Group to Aid Cuban Refugees," *Miami Herald*, October 12, 1960.
[63] Ira F. Willard to Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 17, 1960, Folder 14, Box 1906, DBF Papers

The committee's letter spurred federal and state government into action. The letter to Eisenhower was soon reinforced by a call to the White House from Governor Collins.[64] For his part, Collins sought and obtained approval from the state budget commission for a $35,000 emergency fund to alleviate the situation.[65] The Eisenhower administration engaged the crisis by inviting Collins, Willard, and Mayor High to a conference where they could present their case for broad scale federal assistance. The Florida delegation met with Eisenhower's Deputy Assistant for Interdepartmental Affairs, Robert Merriam. It reiterated the position that while most of the burden had fallen on Miami, the Cuban refugee crisis stemmed from the federal government allowing entrance of these exiles into the country.[66] After the meeting, Merriam had a better idea of the situation, or at least of the dissatisfaction among local and state officials. In order to learn more about the situation and silence the calls for federal involvement, Merriam reached out to a refugee expert who had previously assisted the Eisenhower Administration: Tracy S. Voorhees.[67]

Almost four years prior, Voorhees had been selected to head up the President's Committee for Hungarian Refugee Relief, a temporary organization that sought to deal with the refugees escaping from the Soviet Union's repression of the Hungarian revolution in 1956. As head of the PCFHRR, Voorhees coordinated the refugee-resettlement efforts of voluntary agencies, the federal government and private-sector contributors and oversaw the resettlement of 35,000 Hungarian refugees within the United States.[68] Hoping to make use of Voorhees's expertise, Merriam called him into a meeting at the White House on October 25. Voorhees

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[64] Tracy S. Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees," 1971, , Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Voorhees Papers.
[65] James Buchanan, "3 Miamians Going to Refugee Talks," *Miami Herald*, October 22, 1960.
[66] David Kraslow, "Commission to Assist In Handling Refugees," *Miami Herald*, October 25, 1960.
[67] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961."
[68] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 75-81.

urged Merriam to hold off on involving the president personally until other avenues had been explored. A small government conservative, Voorhees believed that the situation might be better resolved through volunteer agencies such as the Red Cross and the National Catholic Welfare Conference. He travelled to New York to meet with American Red Cross president Alfred Gruenther, to determine if the Red Cross would be willing to undertake the challenge of dealing with Miami's Cuban refugees. Gruenther rebuffed Voorhees. The Red Cross could not involve itself in the Miami situation in any major way due to the long, chronic nature of the problem. Despite his best efforts to have a private organization handle the bulk of the refugee problem, Voorhees reported to Merriam that the president would have to involve himself directly in South Florida's refugee crisis.[69]

On November 10, following continued pressure from the Cuban Refugee Committee, the White House formally announced that Voorhees would be tasked with investigating the problem and reporting the scope of it directly to the president.[70] To the disappointment of many in Miami, however, Eisenhower declared that the refugee problem "must in the main continue to be dealt with locally," with Voorhees serving only to determine what added moves the federal government would adopt.[71] This restriction of Voorhees's immediate powers was actually a condition set by Voorhees himself. He had asked the president to make his role investigative in order to avoid "what would otherwise have been heavy local pressures upon me for immediate action before I could find out for sure what the extent of the problem was and

[69] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961."
[70] The Cuban Refugee Committee sent a telegram to the White House on November 5 insisting that the federal government appoint an official with the power to deal with the situation in Miami and warning that "a serious crisis" impended unless action was prompt. See Cuban Refugee Committee to Robert Merriam, November 5, 1960, Folder 1, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, Cuban Heritage Collection, Coral Gables, FL. (Hereafter CHC).
[71] Juanita Greene, "Refugee Expert Coming Here," *Miami Herald*, November 11, 1960.

what needed to be done."[72] Upon arriving in Miami, he told reporters that he had no specific answers to the refugee problem "because we don't' know yet what the needs are," but that he was being advised by former President Herbert Hoover who "knows more about dealing with refugee problems than all of us put together."[73]

Once in Miami, Voorhees met with government and community leaders in an effort to evaluate the scope of the problems in the area. Everywhere he went in those early days, Voorhees was bombarded with appeals for help with the refugee situation. Despite these pleas, he remained skeptical. "There was no doubt that the problem in Miami was a very real one," Voorhees wrote later, "but it was hard to define and I was not at all sure that it had not been overstated." The Cuban refugee situation was quite different from Voorhees's previous experiences with the Hungarian refugees coming from Europe. With the Hungarian refugees, the scope of the problem had been made immediately obvious by the meticulous collection of information when they arrived in the United States. The Hungarian refugees were fingerprinted in Austria, brought to a centralized location in the United States—Camp Kilmer, NJ—and were clearly identifiable as destitute refugees. In Miami he found that confusion reigned, preventing him from developing a clear picture of the situation. "I found it impossible to tell from any facts available what the extent of the real refugee problem—that is, those needing help and resettlement—really was," Voorhees remembered, "because with all the excitement about the situation no one had the facts."[74]

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[72] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961."
[73] Juanita Greene, "Ike Aide in Miami to Discuss Cuban Refugee Plight," *Miami Herald*, November 17, 1960. Voorhees had secured Hoover's advice during his trip to New York and kept in touch with him throughout his tenure in Miami.
[74] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961."

Voorhees was shielded from the pressures put on him by local authorities and community leaders by his mandate to investigate but not act. This allowed him to begin gathering facts. The mass of refugees who had come into the United States as tourists who had yet to be fingerprinted made it impossible to determine the numbers and backgrounds of the exiles in South Florida, but it was estimated that there were 40,000 Cuban "tourists" in the U.S., 30,000 of which were in Miami.[75] Where the INS failed to give Voorhees solid numbers, some were provided by different branches of local government. The Dade County school system, for example, explained that there were 3,500 refugee children in Dade County schools, but only 7% of them were paying the $50 charge that Florida Law had established for non-resident pupils.[76] The rest had the fee waived by Miami school authorities. This led to increased crowding in Miami public schools, something that drew complaints from parents not only because it strained educational resources, but because in a still segregated school system many white parents resented the presence of young Cubans in their children's schools.[77] From religious leaders he learned than another 3,000 had been accepted into parochial schools.[78]

Miami City Manager Melvin Reese reported a recent increase in certain types of crime that had been attributed to the presence of the Cuban refugees. Reese indicated that a division of the Miami Police Department was focusing on an increase in prostitution in the city stemming from the Cuban problem. The women involved were not "representative of the professional prostitute, but rather were women who found themselves in a strange land, displaced from their native country of Cuba and without shelter, food or economic security—resorting to the

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[75] *Ibid*.
[76] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."
[77] Anita Casavantes Bradford, *The Revolution Is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 135.
[78] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."

practice of prostitution."[79] He later indicated that he had authorized the Chief of Police to put 281 officers on 48 hour work weeks as a preventative measure against the crimes committed by the exiles. By December 10, the city of Miami had spent $33,410.90 on the payment of overtime salaries, not counting related expenses which had been absorbed by the city.[80]

Pressures continued to mount in Miami. James Hennessy, deputy director of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, dispelled the idea that those who had entered under tourists' visas would be forced to return to Cuba if they registered with the agency and instead encouraged them to regularize their situation.[81] This was good news for the exiles, but it solidified the permanence of the refugees for local officials and citizens, some of whom started to suggest more radical solutions to the problem. In November, the *Herald* published a letter to the editor from a man named Nathan Altshul suggesting that the solution of the city's problems lay in the deserted Opa-Locka Air Base. A base of operations for the Navy during the Second World War, the Opa-Locka had not been used in some time. Altshul suggested that the Cubans could be put to work in cleaning up the base and the thousands of acres of land surrounding it. The refugees could be housed on the base barracks and fed at the mess halls, and some of the other buildings could be repurposed to become schools and a "rehabilitation center." He further suggested that there was sufficient land around the base for the refugees to raise some of their own food by starting a dairy and chicken farm, and that the boats that brought some of

[79] M.L. Reese to Tracy S. Voorhees, November 25, 1960, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Reports—Confidential Report from City Manager Miami, Box P, Voorhees Papers.
[80] M.L. Reese to Tracy S. Voorhees, December 16, 1960, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Reports—Confidential Report from City Manager Miami, Box P, Voorhees Papers.
[81] Rick Tuttle, "U.S. Lets Cuban Refugees Stay," *Miami Herald*, November 1, 1960.

the refugees to the United States could be remade into a small fishing fleet to feed the refugees in the base.[82]

As the year drew to a close, the idea of using Opa-Locka Air Base as a refugee camp gained some popularity. Whether he got the idea from Altshul's letter or came to it independently, Arthur H. Patten Jr., a member of the Dade County Board of County Commissioners, proposed that some 15,000 refugees could be housed at the base.[83] The refugees, he said, would "increase Dade County's growing governmental problems of law enforcement, schooling, medical care and housing." Putting the refugees in the camp, he argued, would make it easier to evaluate the problems and abilities of the individual exiles in an attempt to place them in jobs in other parts of the country. Patten's idea was met with resistance not only from the refugee community, but from Voorhees and his staff. Publically, Voorhees's deputy, Leo C. Beebe, stated that the idea of the camp did not seem feasible or in the interest of either the refugees or the community.[84] In private, Voorhees had long seen the need for a refugee center to process the Cubans in need of help. He was hesitant to use any military facility, however, for fear that the federal government would be accused of preparing an invasion of Cuba sponsored by the U.S. military.[85]

Regardless, Voorhees felt that he needed an equivalent to the Kilmer processing center if any organized effort for Cuban resettlement could be made. His initial focus still placed the bulk of the responsibility for running the center on local authorities and civic groups, describing

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[82] Nat. Altshul, letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, November 25, 1960.
[83] Arthur H. Patten Jr. to Senator Spressard L. Holland, January 9, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Correspondence—Congressional, Box O, Voorhees Papers.
[84] "Refugees Oppose a Camp in Florida," *New York Times*, January 11, 1961.
[85] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961."

it to reporters as a central refugee office operated by a broad based committee of local citizens.[86] This office would serve the same function Camp Kilmer had, but without providing refugees with room and board. The problem with establishing such a center, and with waiting for a statistically significant number of Cubans to register there, was that it would take (in Voorhees's estimation) six weeks to two months to gather the data needed to determine a permanent solution to Miami's problems. In the meantime, his fact-finding mandate was just barely allowing him to resist the pressures from Mayor High, the Cuban Refugee Committee, and other organizations that demanded he take action at once and "recommend that the Federal Government take the whole problem off Miami's hands." This was a recommendation he was still not prepared to make.[87]

Voorhees's recollection of events suggests that he withstood the pressures from local groups by professionally shielding himself with his mandate. Others had a different recollection of him, painting him as harsh and cold hearted. Bryan Walsh recounted an encounter he had had with Voorhees during the latter's tenure in Miami. The priest had made an appeal for greater action on the part of the federal government. The Cuban refugees, Walsh argued, were in dire straits and needed immediate help. "Give them a tin can and let them beg on Flagler Street," Voorhees retorted.[88] Regardless of his reactions to it, the pressure was mounting. It soon became clear to Voorhees that he could not simply wait six weeks before he started acting to relieve the situation to some degree. Ever the skeptic, Voorhees was still bothered with the question of whether or not he had enough facts to create such a center and to ask President Eisenhower for a substantial sum of money to begin operations. On December 1, Voorhees

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[86] Juanita Greene, "Miami Moves Ahead on Four Fronts To Relieve Plight of Cuba Refugees," *Miami Herald*, November 23, 1960.
[87] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961," and "The Cuban Refugees."
[88] Walsh, "Cubans 84."

once again contacted Herbert Hoover in an effort to lay out the facts—frankly, and urgently—as best he could. The former president told Voorhees that he was justified in acting and should report the facts as he understood them to the Eisenhower Administration, along with a request for funds.[89]

That same day, Voorhees wrote a preliminary report to the President regarding his activities and his assessment of the situation in Miami. While he felt obligated to explain to the president that there were no adequate figures to determine the scope of the problem, he had determined that the situation in Miami was "most critical." The refugee issue in Miami was one which differed from the crises of previous decades. "The United States is, for the first time in many, many years, the country of first asylum for large numbers of refugees fleeing oppression," Voorhees wrote. This fact, combined with the muddled migratory practices and the sheer number of refugees, created twin problems in Miami: the humanitarian emergency and the potential security threat of infiltration by Castro loyalists. The solution to both problems was the "resettlement of substantial numbers of these refugees in places away from the Miami area." The crisis, he concluded, was greater than could be handled by the local or state authorities or welfare agencies. Voorhees recommended that he or someone else be given, on a temporary basis, "the power and adequate support requisite to take necessary action as your representative pending my final report." This support was to take the form of funds not to exceed a total of one million dollars.[90]

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[89] Voorhees, "Cuban Refugee Assignment—Oct. 1960 to February 1961," and "The Cuban Refugees."
[90] Tracy S. Voorhees to Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 1, 1960, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Reports—TSV Confidential Report to President Dec. 1 1960, Box P, Voorhees Papers.

After receiving Voorhees's report, the White House began to involve itself more directly in Miami's refugee situation. On December 2, the Eisenhower Administration authorized the $1,000,000 grant and made Voorhees the President's personal representative as he had requested, broadening his authority to act in Miami.[91] In doing so, the White House took a more aggressive rhetorical stance against the Cuban government. The money would be used to aid refugees from what Eisenhower officially described as a "Communist-controlled" regime. Although officials in the State Department had previously accused the Castro regime of being influenced by communism, the *New York Times* noted that this assertion upon the granting of Voorhees's request was the first time in which the United States had officially accused the Cuban government of being communist controlled.[92] This rhetorical escalation likely resulted from a legal calculation based on the origins of the funds. The million dollars to aid the Cuban refugees came from the President's $150,000,000 fund for special contingencies. It had been drawn from that reserve through a provision of the Mutual Security act known as the Dirksen-Douglas amendment. This section of the act proclaimed a hope that "peoples who have been subjected to the captivity of Communist despotism shall again enjoy the right of self-determination" and that "they shall again have the right to choose the form of government under which they live."[93] The language chosen by the White House in announcing the funds allotted to help the situation in Miami provided the justification to use security funds in dealing with a humanitarian crisis centered on an American city and served as a geo-political chess move. By complying with Voorhees's request, the Eisenhower administration was able to both

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[91] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."
[92] Felix Belair Jr., "President Allots $1,000,000 to Help Cuban Refugees," *New York Times*, December 3, 1960.
[93] *Ibid*.

formally identify Castro's Cuba as a communist state, and to use the situation in Miami as evidence to both the American public and the world.

Upon receiving the authority and funding with which to act, Voorhees called in a temporary staff of workers who had worked with him during the Hungarian situation. He contacted Leo C. Beebee of the Ford Motor Company, who had run the program at Camp Kilmer and secured his services to oversee the operations of the volunteer agencies that would handle the resettlement of the refugees, including the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), Church World Services (CWS), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).[94] Voorhees secured office space for the registration of the refugees and the operation of these volunteer agencies at the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center, which had been established by the city just days before.[95] Voorhees envisioned the work of the center as primarily collecting information. Any relief provided for refugees should be channeled from private funding sources, instead of government funds. Upon receiving the $1,000,000 he had requested of the White House, he made it clear to reporters that he expected to return most of those funds to the federal government.[96] Voorhees worried, however, about directly requesting funds from private sources. His position as the president's personal representative might make it appear that these appeals came directly from the Eisenhower White House. He later recalled with pride that the publicity he and his staff had brought to the issue in requesting the assistance of the American people resulted in

[94] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."
[95] Juanita Greene, "Miami Moves Ahead on Four Fronts To Relieve Plight of Cuba Refugees," *Miami Herald*, November 23, 1960.
[96] Felix Belair Jr., "President Allots $1,000,000 to Help Cuban Refugees," *New York Times*, December 3, 1960.

several gifts, including a $10,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation that went to the Centro Hispanico Catolico.[97]

The most memorable of the gifts from private agencies came in the form of a $100,000 gift from the Texaco Corporation. The bulk of this money went to the charitable organizations working in Miami. Catholic charities received $50,000. IRC received $25,000, while CWS and HIAS received $5,000 each.[98] While Voorhees shifted Texaco's money to different charitable organizations, he kept some in reserve for the fast approaching Christmas holiday. Voorhees and his staff used $1,956.75 from the Texaco funds, and a matching contribution from the First National Bank of Miami, to establish a Christmas dinner program.[99] More than 2,500 refugees came to the center's offices and received $1.50 each, or $6.00 per family for the purchase of a Christmas dinner, thanks to the arranged corporate sponsorship. "Nobody, therefore, who came for help went hungry on Christmas and our offer of help was well publicized," reported Voorhees to his contact at Texaco after the New Year.[100]

Because Eisenhower would be stepping down in January, Voorhees knew that his tenure as the president's representative would be brief. He sought to advance the resettlement of Cuban refugees past his tenure by holding a conference on the matter between January 29 and 31, 1961. Voorhees brought 150 delegates from all over the country to discuss the need for resettlement and the problems facing Miami and the refugees. He estimated that two thirds of the conference participants were Catholic priests, and he credited the National Catholic Welfare

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[97] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."
[98] Tracy S. Voorhees to Kerry King, Texaco Corporation, February 27, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Texaco Inc, Box P, Voorhees Papers.
[99] Leo C. Beebee to Tracy S. Voorhees, January 3, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Texaco Inc, Box P, Voorhees Papers.
[100] Tracy S. Voorhees to Kerry King, February 27, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Documents—Texaco Inc, Box P, Voorhees Papers.

Conference as the most effective group in the resettlement of refugees, both Hungarian and Cuban, stating that they "truly embodied humanity in action."[101] Voorhees saw resettlement as the only viable option for the resolution of the refugee crisis. Many of the very priests whom he credited with ably resettling significant numbers of refugees throughout the United States did not see resettlement as the wholesale solution to South Florida's refugee problems. While they agreed that resettlement would serve as an important pressure valve for the community, the Diocese of Miami "never regarded the Resettlement Program as the ultimate solution to the Cuban refugee problem." The Diocese believed that the refugees needed to be given free choice to determine whether they wanted to stay in Miami or to relocate, and that the federal government and the national resettlement agencies had a responsibility to those that chose to stay in Miami.[102] The resettlement conference did not resolve the issue of whether or not this policy would solve the refugee problem, but it established the framework for national resettlement and a network of actors across the country that sought to further this agenda.

Two days before President Kennedy took office, Tracy Voorhees filed his final report to President Eisenhower. Dated January 18, 1961, the report conveyed his recommendations on the refugee problem and his resignation from his temporary post, effective at the President's convenience. The report stated that in Miami "an ever-mounting Cuban population quite obviously has overrun the community's capacity to cope with it." The problem, Voorhees informed the President, was now a national one. To illustrate this point, Voorhees utilized the hard data he had obtained from the refugee center. Between November 21 and January 12 some 4,000 Cuban adults in need of help had been interviewed, each representing a family unit

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[101] Voorhees, "The Cuban Refugees."
[102] Bryan O. Walsh to Coleman Carroll, November 10, 1966, Folder Commission on Cuban Refugees 1966, Box 6, Series I, Walsh Papers.

of 2.77 persons. Voorhees could now directly address the problem using comprehensive facts on nearly 12,000 Cuban living in Miami between those dates. All respondents were unemployed, and their material needs were significant.[103]

In the area of housing, Voorhees reported that 43% of refugee families were living in one-room dwellings that were sometimes shared with friends or relatives. Referring to living situations similar to those described by Juanita Greene two months before, the report stated that larger dwellings were often occupied by enormous groups. Dwellings with 11 to 30 rooms were shared by groups ranging from 17 to 127 refugees. This housing situation was compounded by other needs. Over 40% of respondents needed aid in food, clothing, housing, or a combination of these. "In view of the very bad housing conditions above described," Voorhees wrote, "it is a tribute to the courage of these distressed people that the least frequent request made upon the Center has been for Housing assistance."[104]

These problems extended to the younger refugees as well. There were, in this period, 6,500 Cuban students attending Miami's public and parochial schools. About 93% of those attending the public schools had been exempted from the $50 for non-residents due to necessity. Necessity also exempted 18% from school charges for instructional supplies and 6% from the school lunch charge. Cafeteria supervisors reported that many of the Cuban students were getting their one hot meal per day at school. Class sizes ranged up to forty-two students in the public schools and up sixty students per classroom in the parochial schools with nearly two thirds of the students, in some instances, being unable to speak English. While the public school system was developing special orientation sessions for the students given by Spanish-speaking

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[103] Tracy S. Voorhees, "Report to the President of the United States on the Cuban Refugee Problem."
[104] *Ibid*.

teachers, the schools needed at least twenty-five more bilingual educators and up to fifty more additional teachers in order to cope with the influx of new students. At the university level, Voorhees estimated that as many as 900 Cuban students were experiencing financial difficulties and might have to leave U.S. colleges and universities.[105]

Voorhees used the report to reiterate his belief that "the heart of the problem remains in Miami and the crux of it is our ability to resettle refugees from Miami." He advocated a significant push for resettlement utilizing, primarily, private charitable funds. Voorhees explained the attitude of many Cubans who expected a swift return home after an inevitable fall of the Castro regime, and indicated that a key to successful resettlement efforts lied in "the assurance to the refugees that the United States will be equally interest in giving needed assistance to them to return to their homeland if conditions improve there in a manner to make this possible." If the refugees could be assured that they would be provided the means by which to return to Cuba once Castro was gone, they would be far more likely to brave a language barrier, the separation from the larger Cuban community, and the colder weather of the northern states for a job that better suited their qualifications and needs.[106]

Out of desperation, Cubans had been taking any jobs available in the Miami area. These jobs were often informal service jobs that ill-suited a highly educated and highly motivated migrant community. "The problem—which in reality is a great asset," Voorhees wrote, was that so many of the refugees were in a professional or highly skilled class. Out of the Cubans adults who had registered at the center, 55% had completed a high school education, 12% were college graduates, 7% had advanced or professional degrees, with over 300 of them having

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[105] *Ibid*.
[106] *Ibid*.

medical degrees.[107] The large proportion of professionals and highly skilled workers drove Voorhees's conclusion that the assimilation of the refugees had to be done on a national level instead of a local level in which their skills would be wasted by sheer over-abundance. The refugee situation was a significant problem, but the makeup of the exile population could also serve the United States. Voorhees believed that this situation had to be treated as both "a national responsibility and a national opportunity."[108]

The first two years of the refugee crisis in Miami were characterized by a slow realization of the scope of the refugee problem in South Florida and an even slower reaction by the federal government. These early years saw the establishment of patterns that would hold for many years even as conditions changed. The Catholic Church in Miami established itself as an ally to the refugee community and established its role as an advocate for its needs, often pushing the local, state, and federal authorities to do more for the exiles. While concerns over the conflicts that would spill over onto the city streets were overshadowed by a Cold War-fueled sympathy for the exiles and a concern over their sheer numbers, the fear of how the Cubans would change the city began to take hold in the minds of many Miamians. Officials in the U.S. government began to exhibit an interest in the Cuban refugees that went beyond the humanitarian; the refugees could, perhaps, be useful in the larger struggle against communism. And Tracy Voorhees, despite a distaste for the idea of government directly involving itself in the refugee crisis, established the inchoate Cuban Refugee Center and set in motion a resettlement

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[107] Voorhees also indicated that in the same time period 112 accountants and auditors, 125 lawyers and judges, 142 professors and teaches, 81 engineers, and 166 business managers interviewed at the center, compared to only 172 semi-skilled and unskilled laborers.

[108] *Ibid*.

program that would remain central to the federal government's reception of the refugees for well over a decade to come. As the Kennedy Administration transitioned into power, however, it would become clear that their response to the refugee crisis, and the effect of this response on the city, would be vastly different from Voorhees's vision.

# CHAPTER 2—"THE SCORE": FEDERAL FUNDING, REFUGEE MANAGEMENT, AND THE CHANGING ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF SOUTH FLORIDA, 1961-1973

On January 18, 1961 Tracy Voorhees was contacted by one of John F. Kennedy's aides. Voorhees had already submitted his resignation to the president elect. The new administration wanted to know if Voorhees would continue in his role until January 31 and if he would be willing to carry on his work in Miami within the framework of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare after that date. Voorhees assented to the former, but declined the latter, informing the aide that he would not be able to work successfully under those conditions.[1] Kennedy was certain that the best approach to the Cuban refugee problem was to centralize the work under HEW and its new Secretary, Abraham Ribicoff. As a cabinet member, Ribicoff would be able to coordinate the efforts of other federal agencies in the field.[2] The new president's idea of how to handle the refugee influx was decidedly different from Voorhees's own approach to the problem. This was not lost on Voorhees or on his mentor, Herbert Hoover.

In February, the former President wrote Voorhees a letter inquiring of his protégé why he was no longer in charge of the refugee situation. After Voorhees explained that he had declined to continue serving under a new bureaucratic structure, Hoover wrote Voorhees again and explained that he was "well out of it," and that while he had done excellent work, "these

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[1] Tracy S. Voorhees to Herbert Hoover, February 14, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Tracy S. Voorhees Papers, Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (Cited hereafter as Voorhees Papers).

[2] John F. Kennedy to Tracy S. Voorhees, undated, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Voorhees Papers.

new people do not yet understand what sort of task it is."[3] Voorhees, for his part, agreed. When President Kennedy diverted an additional $4,000,000 for the refugee situation to set up more direct forms of aid for the refugees, Voorhees was displeased. "As soon as the refugees realized that the Government was willing to put them on welfare most of them were happy to stay where they were in the warm climate of Miami and live at Government expense," Voorhees wrote later. He believed that in committing itself to more direct aid, the Kennedy administration had undercut the position of the resettlement agencies he had been working with. He admitted that while some resettlement had taken place, the foundation of the program had been undermined. "In short," Voorhees summed up, "the Welfare State had taken over!"[4]

Voorhees had sought to use as few public funds as he possibly could in alleviating the situation in Miami. After his tenure in South Florida ended, he bragged to Hoover that he had spent only two thirds of the $1,000,000 allocated to him.[5] He had believed that the Cuban refugee influx would be best resolved by making resettlement in other areas of the country the most attractive option for the exiles. Forcing the refugees to relocate from Miami, however, would be antithetical to the promise of freedom that the United States had implicitly and explicitly made them. This did not deter the U.S. government from trying to direct the refugees towards resettlement through the promise of jobs across the country. By increasing the levels of direct aid to the Miami area, the Kennedy Administration was, in Voorhees's eyes, ensuring that the Cuban refugees would not have need to seek out colder and less culturally familiar

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[3] Quoted by Voorhees in "The Cuban Refugees," 1971, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Voorhees Papers.
[4] *Ibid*.
[5] Tracy S. Voorhees to Herbert Hoover, February 14, 1961, Folder T.S. Voorhees President's Representative for Cuban Refugees—Essay 1 The Cuban Refugees Mar. 1971, Box O, Voorhees Papers.

climes. His work in Miami and his experience from the Hungarian refugee crisis were being discounted in favor of a big government approach that blocked what he saw as the only viable solution.

While Voorhees rightly identified the intervention of the welfare state in the management of Miami's growing Cuban exile crisis, he failed to identify it as a significant intersection between the welfare state and the national security apparatus. The Kennedy Administration was responding to the continuing calls for help from Miami's political and community leaders, but the new round of efforts to resolve Miami's problems also had deep national security implications. The creation of the Cuban Refugee Program and the meanings that officials within the national security apparatus assigned to the lives of exile civilians in Miami implicated even the most mundane activities as actions of foreign policy. This was not been meant to permanently change the face of South Florida. As years passed and the exile community became more and more entrenched in the city of Miami, what was intended as short term aid became an access to structures of privilege that mirrored those of middle class white Americans. This fundamentally transformed the Miami metropolitan area, just as other defense related expenditures re-shaped cities all across the Sunbelt. While this transformation carried with it a unique cultural element, the economic and political structures worked on a parallel tract.

While Tracy Voorhees's efforts had helped many Cubans and the organizations that sought to relocate them, the immediacy of the problem remained. Voorhees's enthusiasm for relocation was shared by federal authorities who continued to fund and coordinate with the

volunteer agencies that sought to ease Miami's burden by relocating significant numbers of exiles. In the early days of 1961, many exiles were still reluctant to take up offers of relocation to what often seemed cold, distant, and foreign new locations in the United States. There was also a feeling among many exiles that the Castro regime would not last for much longer. This belief that *el exilio* would end "soon" was not restricted to the exiles. Early in 1961, this feeling had come to infect many of those who sought to help the exiles both in a private capacity and as part of a larger, concerted federal effort.

Father Bryan Walsh, for example, was dealing with an ever increasing number of Cuban refugee children in Miami. Some of them were in the care of their parents, of extended family, or of family friends, but many were unaccompanied minors who had been sent to the United States by their parents and who had no one to care for them but Miami's Catholic Church. By January 14, 1961, when Walsh started a diary of his experiences with these children, Miami's Catholic Charities had forty-one Cuban children in their care.[6] Miami's schools were already overtaxed by the introduction of the exile children into their classrooms, so Walsh and others sought to find solutions for this overcrowding problem. He also encountered a problem that was directly related to the pervading sense that the refugees would soon be returning to a Cuba operating under the educational traditions of the previous regime. The night before he started his diary, he was advised that any education that high school-aged refugees received in Dade County schools would be worthless upon their return to Cuba. The Cuban students would have to begin their secondary education once again or pick up from the point at which they left Cuba for the United States. "The American high school curriculum," Walsh concluded, "is of no use to

[6] Bryan O. Walsh, "Diary—Cuban Refugee Problems 1961," January 14, 1961, Box 41, Series III, Bryan O. Walsh Papers, Barry University, Miami, FL (hereafter cited as Walsh Papers).

them as far as continuing their Cuban education."[7] Walsh did not address the idea that the exile of the Cuban people would be coming to an end in a relatively short time frame, but it is implied by his perception of this as an immediate problem and the actions that he proposed as head of Catholic Charities. Walsh planned to create a Cuban Secondary School at the Centro Hispanico Catolico with the help of James Baker, headmaster of the Ruston School, an American school in Havana. Walsh estimated that this new school could serve some 400 Cuban students who would receive both an American high school diploma and a Cuban bachillerato degree upon completing their education.[8]

The influx of unaccompanied Cuban children only increased in the days after Walsh began writing his diary. Walsh failed to mention in his journal, however, that the increase in unaccompanied minors arriving in Miami and the percentage of this group that ended up in the care of the church was, in part, a result of his own actions. In the last months of 1960, Walsh was already involved in the care of unaccompanied Cuban minors. The priest became particularly concerned for this population when he was introduced to a young exile named Pedro. Pedro had arrived in Miami a month before and his parents had expected that he would be taken care of by friends and family already in the United States. Pedro's parents did not expect that these caretakers would have their own troubles with merely subsisting in Miami. The boy had passed from household to household until he was brought to the Catholic Welfare Bureau. Walsh met the scared and hungry boy and learned that in the month since he had arrived in the city, Pedro had lost twenty pounds.[9] In the weeks that followed, Walsh attempted to get the resources needed in order to care for the young exiles. He convinced Tracy Voorhees

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[7] Walsh, "Diary—Cuban Refugee Problems 1961," January 14, 1961.
[8] *Ibid*, January 17, 1961.
[9] Bryan O. Walsh, "Cuban Refugee Children," *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs* 13, nos. 3 & 4. (July-Oct. 1971): 387.

of the needs of this population and the latter included a recommendation that funds be used to this end in his report to President Eisenhower.[10]

In early December of that year, James Baker came to Miami to meet a group of American businessmen from the Havana-American Chamber of Commerce. Much like the Cuban exiles, the representatives of the American corporations that had withdrawn from Cuba after the revolution were waiting in Miami for what they expected was the imminent overthrow of Castro's regime. Baker brought the concerns of many of his Cuban friends, including several members of the anti-Castro underground, about the safety and the possible interruption to the education of their children to this meeting. He hoped to gain the help of these businessmen in creating a boarding school for the children. One of the participants agreed to introduce him to Walsh.[11] Baker's meeting with Walsh provided a solution for the priest. Walsh had become convinced that scattered and separate efforts would only do damage to the cause. In Baker he found an able and willing partner. Walsh and Baker agreed on terms and determined that Baker and his Cuban contacts would be in charge of getting the children out of Cuba, while Walsh would see to it that these young refugees were met at the airport and cared for in the United States. Baker originally estimated that 200 children would be sent by their parents to the United States.[12] Baker and his Cuban contacts established what came to be known as Operation Pedro Pan, which helped Cuban parents get their children out of Cuba. In the United States, Walsh developed the Cuban Children's Program for the care and protection of these children.[13]

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[10] Walsh, "Cuban Refugee Children," 389.
[11] María de los Angeles Torres, *The Lost Apple: Operation Pedro Pan, Cuban Children in the U.S. and the Promise of a Better Future* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 63-64.
[12] Walsh, "Cuban Refugee Children," 390.
[13] *Ibid*, 379.

Baker and Walsh soon found that their original estimate of 200 children was quite inadequate. A series of rumors were quickly spreading throughout the Cuban middle class. CIA sponsored Radio Swan stated that the revolutionary government was seeking a transfer of parental authority to the state, removing the *patria potestad* over Cuba's children from their parents.[14] Rumors of children being removed from their homes were particularly troubling to the significant section of middle class Cubans who had emigrated from Spain or who were the children of Spanish immigrants. They recalled memories of the removal of children from battlefronts in the Spanish Civil War by the Republican government and their relocation to the Soviet Union. The rumors that the children of those arrested for counterrevolutionary activities would be sent to the USSR as an additional reprisal against their parents were particularly alarming because of these memories.[15]

Miami's Cuban community was soon "buzzing" with reports of Castro's alleged intention to indoctrinate the children and there was talk of "hundreds" of Cuban children arriving at Miami's airport each day.[16] Walsh had a true appreciation of the international implications of his actions and those of his agency in housing the unaccompanied children. "No longer were we simply a social agency concerned about a community problem," he wrote, "we were now sharing the worries of families we did not even know, hundreds of miles away in a life and death struggle in the Cold War."[17] Walsh used this very perspective in obtaining visas for the refugee children. He convinced the Department of State to issue visa waivers for the children, which

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[14] Torres defines *patria postestad* as "a Roman legal concept regarding the authority to make decisions for children. In Roman law the father had almost absolute authority over his children. This later evolved into parental rights. By the early twentieth century, it was well established that this authority, including how to educate children, fell to the parents." See Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 89.
[15] Anita Casavantes Bradford, *The Revolution Is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 109-111.
[16] "Castro to Put Children Under State Control?" *Miami Herald*, November 9, 1960.
[17] Walsh, "Cuban Refugee Children," 395.

they did so long as the minors became the ultimate responsibility of the Catholic Welfare Bureau.[18] An agreement between the Department of State and the Catholic Welfare Bureau allowed for the issuance of up to 250 student visas for unaccompanied minors from Cuba.[19]

The program that came to be called Operation Pedro Pan ran from December 1960 to October 1962.[20] On December 26, 1960 Bryan Walsh welcomed the first two Pedro Pan children to the United States, a pair of siblings named Sixto and Vivian Aquino.[21] Baker established a network of parents and dissidents who would distribute the visa waivers to parents in Cuba. Once the children landed in Miami, Walsh and his organization would see to it that the children were placed with relatives or in the care of the Cuban Children's Program, which had facilities in Florida and 35 other states and the District of Columbia.[22] By January of 1961, it became clear that the volume of children arriving in the United States would far overshoot the initial estimates. In a meeting at the State Department, Walsh was told that the Catholic Welfare Bureau could petition for a waiving of visa requirements for Cuban children, whom he argued were in imminent danger of communist brainwashing. This plan was approved and Walsh was invested with the authority to grant visa waivers for Cuban children under the age of sixteen.[23] This allowed for greater number of exits by unaccompanied Cuban minors, sent to the United States by desperate parents who did not know when or if they would see their children again.

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[18] *Ibid*, 397.
[19] Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 69.
[20] Yvonne M. Conde, *Operation Pedro Pan: The Untold Exodus of 14,048 Cuban Children* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 47.
[21] Walsh, "Cuban Refugee Children," 378.
[2222]"Catholic Welfare Bureau Fact Sheet," September 20, 1963, Folder Catholic Welfare Bureau Cuban Children's Program 1963, Box 5, Series I, Walsh Papers.
[23] Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 75-76.

Over the nearly two years of Operation Pedro Pan, the Cuban Children's Program helped 14,124 children enter the United States.[24] Walsh estimated that approximately 50% of the unaccompanied youths were reunited with family members upon arrival in Miami.[25] Of the minors taken into the care of the Catholic Welfare Bureau, 85% were between the ages of twelve and eighteen and 70% were boys over the age of twelve. Statistical information regarding the children who were delivered to relatives upon arrival and those older minors who came of age and became independent soon after arrival was not collected.[26]

With the cessation of regular flights between the United States and Cuba following the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962, the influx of new unaccompanied minors was significantly reduced. The Catholic Welfare Bureau's own statistics from September of 1963 indicate that after October 22, 1962, only 269 children were accepted into the program. Of the children they had assisted, 10,611 had been reunited with parents or relatives and 3,438 remained under the care of the CCP. Of these, 1,914 were placed in group care and 1,569 were placed in foster care.[27] Since the program had been established to safeguard the parental rights of Cuban parents over their children, none of the Pedro Pan children were ever placed for adoption.[28] A crisis regarding parental rights did arise early on when one of the children was hit by a car next to a roller rink in Hialeah. Father Walsh had to appear in court and have the child declared a dependent of the institution in order to have medical care administered after the

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[24] "Catholic Welfare Bureau Fact Sheet," September 20, 1963.
[25] Estimates regarding this number vary. María de los Angeles Torres estimates that the number of children cared for by friends or relatives was closer to 6,000. See Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 148.
[26] Bryan O. Walsh, "Operation Pedro Pan," March 1, 2001, Folder Cuban Children's Program 1964-2001, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.
[27] "Catholic Welfare Bureau Fact Sheet," September 20, 1963.
[28] Walsh, "Operation Pedro Pan," March 1, 2001.

accident. The following day the CCP secured a blanket declaration for all the unaccompanied minors under their care in order to prevent any future hindrance to the care of the children.[29]

To fund the care of an increasing number of these children, the Catholic Welfare Bureau turned to the federal government once again. President Kennedy charged the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare with the care of the children while in the United States, expecting they would return to Cuba in the near future. HEW's Children's Bureau worked with the Florida Department of Public Welfare to disburse funds and contract the services of social service agencies. A total of $138,619,000 was spent for the Unaccompanied Children's Program and by 1967 the Children's Bureau reported that 8,331 Cuban children had been in the care of foster homes and institutions.[30] For those children relocated to other parts of the country, the voluntary agencies in charge of relocation were reimbursed by the federal government for costs and expenditures related to travel.[31] The Catholic Welfare Bureau, for example, estimated that in 1962 the costs incurred by the organization related to the transportation of children throughout the United States amounted to $285,585.[32]

As the number of children in the Church's charge increased, Walsh and the Catholic Welfare Bureau sought placement for the minors. While the national Church helped with placement for a significant number of the refugee minors, Miami's Catholic Church was faced with the housing needs of an ever-growing group of children. The Miami Catholic Welfare Bureau's Unaccompanied Children's Program saw its ranks swell to 300 staff members including

[29] Walsh, "Diary—Cuban Refugee Problems 1961," January 25 and 26, 1961.
[30] Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 148.
[31] Conde, *Operation Pedro Pan*, 56.
[32] "Catholic Welfare Bureau Fact Sheet," September 20, 1963.

priests, social workers, doctors, office personnel, cooks, social workers, drivers, and others.[33] This increase was necessary as several temporary homes for the young refugees were established in the Miami area. The furthest and largest shelter was Florida City, established in October of 1961, some 35 miles south of downtown Miami. Florida City was established in a series of light colored two story buildings divided into apartments. It was licensed to house 700 children in a unique arrangement by which the children were allowed to live in apartments under the supervision of Cuban refugee couples, an arrangement that proved less traumatic than the foster care experiences of other Pedro Pan children. They could bond with the other children in the common areas while maintaining a semblance of family life in their living quarters.[34]

While many of the Pedro Pan children have fond memories of the program, and particularly of Father Walsh, there are others who encountered abuse and heartbreak within the program. A group of Cuban boys, sent to Helena, Montana alleged that Monsignor Harrington, the local Director of Catholic Charities, had both physically and sexually abused them.[35] At least one boy recalled midnight visits from sexual predators in the all-boy Camp Matecumbe. There were also incidents of hazing and bullying at that camp and at other locations.[36] At St. Vincent's Orphanage in Vincennes, Indiana, the children were stripped of almost all their possessions in order not to differentiate between the Cuban children and the

[33] Conde, *Operation Pedro Pan*, 74-76.
[34] *Ibid*, 91.
[35] Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 169-170.
[36] Conde, *Operation Pedro Pan*, 77-79.

local orphans by class. In a state with a very low percentage of Hispanics, the Cuban children were referred to as "spics" by the white orphans.[37]

Some of the children were particularly traumatized when, because of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the number of children needing care declined and Archbishop Coleman Carroll and his advisors decided that all the remaining homes should be consolidated into a single location. Bryan Walsh, by then promoted to the rank of Monsignor, disagreed with the decision. He had wanted to move the remaining children into smaller facilities where they could receive foster parent care in the model of Florida City. Walsh was overruled and ordered to open a 500-person shelter at Opa-Locka Naval Station, in the disused barracks, where the beds were lined up next to one another in a cavernous hall.[38]

Monsignor Walsh was not alone in his discontent with the Opa Locka facility. Many of the remaining minors were furious at being moved to Opa Locka. At least one boy made his displeasure known to Monsignor Walsh himself. A former resident of Saint Raphael's, Angel Wong Alcazar wrote the priest that he felt "betrayed, offended and defrauded." Opa Locka, according to Wong, was known as "*la pajarera del Welfare*," Welfare's birdcage. There, he wrote, the boys who were being treated for homosexual tendencies had reverted "to such extremes" that one afternoon he had found "a boy exhibiting a pretty woman's hair due [sic], of the latest style, through the whole Camp." [39] The closer supervision the young exiles had received in the smaller homes and which had reinforced heteronormative practices was absent in the larger camp, allowing for freer experimentation regarding sexuality and gender

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[37] *Ibid*, 125-127.
[38] *Ibid*, 98.
[39] Translation of letter from Angel Wong Alcazar to Bryan O. Walsh, August 8, 1964, Folder Cuban Children's Program 1964-2001, Box 26, Series II, Walsh Papers.

performance among the Pedro Pan children. Wong saw this as a betrayal of both the social and religious norms that the parents of the children sent to the United States had expected would be maintained by the minors' caretakers.

These norms were violated in other areas outside heteronormativity. Wong wrote that Opa Locka was also a place where boys became "cheap gangsters" and where the children of proud Cubans of breeding lost their middle class manners and ate "like pigs." Wong felt that the remaining young Cubans had been abandoned by the church and instead delivered into the hands of the monolithic "Welfare." The children raised in this environment would be a disappointment to their parents, "who one time fill [sic] with faith sent their children to a Catholic institution to save them from Communism and they found that they are worst [sic] than if they would have stayed there under Communism."[40] If the children had been sent to the United States to avoid an institutional takeover of their upbringing and to ensure that they would be raised according to their parents' wishes, then, in Wong's view, the sacrifice had ill-served the children at Opa Locka. For many of the Cuban minors who remained in the custody of the church for years after their parents sent them to the United States, the myth of a swift return had proven itself entirely false and the face of the kindly Irish priest who welcomed the children to Miami had been replaced by a faceless institutional bureaucracy.

The children who were cared for outside of an institutional setting, by foster parents, faced their own set of challenges. Some had terrible experiences, but even those who were cared for by truly generous and good foster parents were still faced with problems such as discrimination and a fundamental desire to understand and live with their parents' decision to send them to a different country. This burning existential question led to both frustration and

[40] Wong Alcazar to Walsh, August 8, 1964.

confusion. One unaccompanied minor hoped to explain her exile experience in the form of a poem:

What It Means to Be An Exile

By a Cuban Foster Child

It means to wake up a day and find yourself in a new country and home.
It means to remember how just yesterday you left your country and home for the first day.
It means to know that your flag is being walked upon and your country is being torn apart.
* * *
It means to wake up every morning and wish for time to stop because you want to see your sister grow.
It means to remember your parents, and how you thought they were wrong, but they weren't.
It means to know that you must try and lead a new life, but you can't.
* * *
It means to wake up and try to remember about that country you left so long ago.
It means trying to remember about your country, but you can't because your mind wanders farther and farther apart every day.
It means to know that you are forgetting your language and customs and you try to do something about it, but you can't.
* * *
It means to wake up a day without a mother or father to run to, even though they are alive.
It means to remember all those things you used to do so long, long ago.
It means to know that you are becoming an American and on the outside you are proud.
But on the inside, Oh God, doesn't that matter too?
* * *
It means to say your prayers at night and ask for the Communist government to fall.
It means that then you will wonder what you do if this happens.
It means to know that you have a dilemma, because you can't choose between your real parents and foster parents. You love them both!
* * *
And above all it means to pray:

> Oh! God! Please help me to understand your doings, help me to have faith in You and please help me to have the courage which I don't have.[41]

Even those children who had positive experiences as unaccompanied minors when coming to the United States faced the dilemma and the uncertainty of not knowing if they would ever see their parents again. Those who formed attachments to their foster parents both dearly wished and dreaded news that they would be joined in the United States by their families. They were torn between their love for a home country that each day became more and more of a hazy memory and their lives in a new environment. In this way, many of the Pedro Pan children were among the first to face a crisis of national identity that would become endemic to the Cuban American experience in the years that followed.

While Operation Pedro Pan ended with the cessation of flights between Cuba and the United States following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Cuban Children's Program continued until 1981.[42] The minors cared for by the Catholic Welfare Bureau in the latter years of the program tended to be Cuban children who had entered through third countries or who had lost parents in an attempt to enter the United States. Walsh claimed that even following the Cuban Missile Crisis, nearly 90% of the children who remained in the care of the Cuban Children's Program were reunited with their parents by June of 1966.[43] Because there were no follow-up procedures in place for the children who were handed over to relatives or family friends at the airport, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of Cuban children for whom the temporary dissolution of their families would turn permanent. The separation of these children from their

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[41] Quoted in Louise W. Holborn, "The Cuban Refugee Program: Its Development and Implementation," July 31, 1965, Folder 121, Box 40, Series VI, Cuban Refugee Center Records, Cuban Heritage Collection, Coral Gables, FL (Hereafter CHC).
[42] Lourdes Gil, "Operation Pedro Pan," Folder Operation Pedro Pan—Title of program 2000-01, Box 35, Series II, Walsh Papers.
[43] Walsh, "Operation Pedro Pan," March 1, 2001.

parents, however, would play a role in shaping American refugee policy in regard to Cuba's exile community and the politics of the emerging Cuban American community for years to come.

For those exiles who were not unaccompanied children and who did not have significant resources to draw on in the United States, the beginning of 1961 marked a change in the availability of aid in the Miami area. The incoming Kennedy administration sought to build on the foundations Voorhees had laid, but they sought to further these efforts by centralizing them and bringing them within the formal institutional structure of the federal government. President Kennedy wrote a letter to former Connecticut governor and incoming Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Abraham Ribicoff, on January 27, 1961 directing him to assume the responsibilities for all Cuban refugee activities on February 1 of that year. Kennedy instructed Ribicoff to travel to Florida and investigate the problem within a week. The new HEW Secretary was to "make concrete my concern and sympathy for those who have been forced from their homes in Cuba, and to assure them that we shall seek to expedite their voluntary return as soon as conditions there facilitate that." The new president sought to re-emphasize to audiences both at home and abroad that the United States would act as a humanitarian sanctuary. "In the presently troubled world, we cannot be a peacemaker if we are not also the protector of those individuals as well as nations who cast with thier [sic] personal liberty and hopes for the future." [44]

By February 2nd Ribicoff had prepared a report for the president based on his experiences over several days in the Miami area. "It is apparent that many of the refugees are

[44] Holborn, "The Cuban Refugee Program: Its Development and Implementation," July 31, 1965.

now in serious need," Ribicoff wrote, "they are living in extremely crowded quarters; their resources have been used up or have largely depleted; and health and educational facilities are badly overtaxed." He warned the president that many of the refugees were at the point of desperation and that many others were rapidly approaching it. While he stated that the courage and fortitude of the exiles in the face of such and overwhelming disruption of their lives were "magnificent," he did report that there was widespread anxiety. In order to combat the continuing crisis, and drawing on his observations, Ribicoff made a series of recommendations that embraced Voorhees's resettlement push, but which would also create a safety net for those refugees who chose not to resettle.[45]

Resettlement of the Cuban refugees from the Miami area was to be encouraged and supported and was to remain primarily the responsibility of volunteer agencies with the federal government providing supplemental support including transportation and adjustment costs. While many exiles were wary of being resettled for fear of new environments and of being away from Miami should things change in Cuba, Ribicoff recommended that return transportation to Miami be provided for those who had been voluntarily resettled if there were some fundamental change in the situation on the island. "The Federal program is based on the principle of facilitating the eventual return of the Cuban refugees to their homeland," Ribicoff advised Kennedy. A program of financial assistance was also to be established for Cuban refugee families both in the Miami area and elsewhere, to be administered through existing federal, state and local channels. A similar arrangement was to be reached with established public agencies to provide essential health services to this population.

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[45] Abraham Ribicoff, "Report of Secretary Abraham A. Ribicoff on the Cuban Refugee Problem," February 2, 1961, Folder 78, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

Ribicoff also proposed a series of measures to aid in the education of the exiles, including loans for higher education, financial assistance for language training, skill refresher courses, orientation and vocational training, and programs in cooperation with the University of Miami to provide accreditation to Cuban professionals. He also endorsed the funding of care for the unaccompanied Cuban minors, the distribution of surplus food, and the requirement that the head of household be registered at the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center in order for a family to be eligible for aid. Ribicoff explained that the remainder of the $1,000,000 allocation made by President Eisenhower the previous December would allow the Cuban Refugee Emergency Center to operate until June 30, 1961. In order to run the larger, comprehensive program additional funds would be required. For that same time period Ribicoff estimated an additional allocation of $4,000,000 would be necessary.[46]

The following day, February 3, President Kennedy approved a plan based on Ribicoff's recommendations. The new program would be based around the idea of temporarily resettling as many refugees as possible to ease the burden on South Florida, to encourage this migration by promising to return them to Miami the moment there were changes in Cuba, and to create a system of aid for refugees both in Dade and in other areas. President Kennedy ordered that the program be established along nine central points:

1. To assist voluntary relief agencies in relief, resettlement and employment;
2. To obtain the assistance of both private and government agencies in securing useful employment opportunities
3. To provide supplemental funds for resettlement;
4. To give direct financial assistance to Cuban refugees through local welfare departments based on standards used in the community involved;
5. To supplement health services;
6. To assist public schools taxed by the influx of refugee children;
7. To augment educational and training facilities for refugees;

[46] Ribicoff, "Report of Secretary Abraham A. Ribicoff on the Cuban Refugee Problem," February 2, 1961.

8. To assist unaccompanied children;
9. To distribute surplus food.[47]

While Kennedy's nine points do not explicitly state the common conception that the Castro regime's days were numbered and that the exiles' stay in the United States was temporary, this is the mindset with which the Kennedy administration initially built the Cuban Refugee Program. As one study of the program conducted four years later pointed out, "until the ill-fated invasion at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, refugees as well as the American authorities considered the program as a brief stop-gap."[48] The new administration was committed to more actively managing the refugee crisis but they ultimately believed that the plan for an upcoming invasion of Cuba by CIA trained exiles would soon make the program obsolete.

On February 6, Ribicoff tasked Commissioner of Social Security William L. Mitchell with implementing and administering the Cuban Refugee Program. Mitchell's Social Security Administration took the lead of the program with the aid of the Public Health Service and the Office of Education.[49] Mitchell appointed Marshal Wise as director of the program, working out of the Cuban Emergency Refugee Center, which found a permanent home at 501 N.E. First Avenue, the skyscraper that had been the headquarters of the *Miami News* and which came to be known as the Freedom Tower.[50] By the end of the month, the Center began distributing assistance checks to those exiles who had registered with the program. On February 27, refugees stood in line outside the center waiting to receive their first biweekly check. Officials at the center estimated that the average monthly assistance for each Cuban family would be $75. Refugees spoke to reporters regarding the hardships they had been enduring. Waldo

[47] Holborn, "The Cuban Refugee Program: Its Development and Implementation," July 31, 1965.
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] Jeanne Mahaffey, "U.S. Cuban Refugee Program," February 6, 1962, Folder 71, Box 4, Series 1, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

Rodriguez, a former Cuban senatorial candidate and government employee from Matanzas had been attempting to sell television sets on commission. "I didn't make out so well," Rodriguez told the *Miami News*. Others made it clear that they did not expect their current situation to last much longer. A former land developer named Jose F. Viciana spoke of a 125-acre farm he owned on the Isle of Pines. "When that man Castro is gone," he said, "it will be one of the finest resort areas in the Caribbean."[51] It was only a matter of time before Viciana, his daughter, and his two grandchildren would be able to return to Cuba to rebuild the lives they had left behind.

The refugees' sense that they would be returning home in the near future stemmed from what one historian has called "an open secret" in both the United States and on the island: the planned invasion of Cuba by American trained exile forces.[52] In March of 1960, President Eisenhower had authorized a CIA plan for an exile led invasion.[53] The CIA began training volunteers from among the exile population in Guatemala, a fact which was very publicly suggested in January of 1961 when the *New York Times* ran an article with the headline "U.S. Helps Train an Anti-Castro Force At Secret Guatemalan Air-Ground Base." *Times* reporter Paul P. Kennedy revealed that the Guatemalan government was training forces to engage in battle with forces of the Cuban government. Guatemalan government officials insisted that the training program was designed to repel an expected invasion from Cuba, but critics claimed otherwise. While the article focused on the training of Guatemalan troops by men who appeared to be American military personnel, it also indicated that the rapidly growing project had brought in

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[51] Jack Oswald, "Cuban Needy Given First U.S. Checks," *Miami News*, February 27, 1961.
[52] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 109.
[53] Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 99.

foreign trainers specializing on guerilla tactics that included Cubans. The Guatemalan official who briefed Kennedy, however, denied that any Cubans were being trained in the camp.[54]

As the days and weeks went on, speculation only grew on both sides of the Florida Straits. The "secret invasion" became a subject of public discussion. A week before the invasion, the *Times* ran another article speculating on what the specific invasion strategy the exile forces would follow would be.[55] The invasion was so taken for granted that it became the object of humor in exile publications. One political cartoon entitled "Hombre Precavido" (A Man Forewarned) showed a toadyish aid informing Fidel Castro that the invasion had begun. A distraught and cowardly Castro then has the aide see to the readiness of his escape submarine, dons armor, starts packing large stacks of cash into a suitcase, and ensures that there is an airplane standing by to evacuate him to Mexico, all before going on television and denying that the Cuban government is at all worried about an invasion and stating all officials remain at their posts.[56]

In March of 1961, the Kennedy administration made changes to the CIA's original military plans and the resulting invasion was an unmitigated military and public relations disaster for both the United States and the exiles.[57] The failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion dampened the mood in Miami concerning a swift return, but it did not extinguish the flame of hope in the hearts and minds of many of the exiles. This failure added importance to the Cuban Refugee Program not only as a relief measure, but also as a Cold War propaganda program. This

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[54] Paul P. Kennedy, "U.S. Helps Train an Anti-Castro Force At Secret Guatemalan Air-Ground Base," *New York Times*, January 10, 1961.
[55] Tad Szulc, "Castro Foes Map Multiple Forays with Guerillas," *New York Times*, April 10, 1961.
[56] "Hombre Precavido," *El Avance Criollo*, April 21, 1961, 13.
[57] The political implications of the invasion and its effect on the relationship between the exile population and the federal government are discussed at length in Chapter 3.

second dimension was made clear both by the public statements of U.S. government officials and by documents related to high level discussions regarding the usefulness of the program. Individuals involved in running the Cuban Refugee Program and the Cuban Refugee Center were clearly often driven by humanitarian desires to help the ever increasing exile population in Miami. This humanitarian desire did not preclude figures like future Cuban Refugee Center director J. Arthur Lazell from expressing concern with how the treatment of the refugees would resonate in Latin America. "How the Cubans are treated is, in the minds of many Latin Americans," Lazell wrote, "indicative of the extent of United States' determination and effectiveness in combatting Communism in the Western Hemisphere."[58] The Cuban exiles, then, would serve as an effective propaganda tool so long as they were shown to have received a warm welcome in the United States.

Discussions of the "Cuban Problem" and its national security implications between the White House and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare show that in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs Invasion the federal government considered placing a greater emphasis on Cuban refugee civilians than on paramilitary activities in the planning for a Castro-free Cuba. A confidential memorandum from April 29, 1961 outlined the objectives of a new, revised Cuban Refugee Program. It suggested that the program's intent was to facilitate the melding of Cuban refugees into American life in a "useful and self-supporting role." The memorandum went on to state that the CRP also sought to "preserve or increase their skills and professional attainments to the end that they as individuals may live more satisfying lives and be a source of trained

[58] J. Arthur Lazell to Marshal Wise, June 27, 1961, Folder 3, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

manpower available to meet the needs when opportunity arrives to return to a free Cuba."[59] In essence, efforts to teach new skills to refugees or to facilitate the ability of Cuban professionals to practice in the United States served to make the refugee self-supporting, to improve their lives, and to provide a post-communist Cuba with a social and economic force that would help turn the country into something more acceptable to US policymakers.

This memo was part of larger discussion about the potential of the Cuban refugees in Miami outside of paramilitary roles. A secret report from May of 1961 suggested the creation of a radically different Cuban Refugee Program that would take on an even greater hand in Cuba's future. The proposed program would "capitalize on the resource these exiles represent" by identifying and training "potential top leadership and key bureaucratic personal for a post-Castro government," preparing the "armed services components of such a government," and providing relief and resettlement to those exiles who did not fit in the previous categories. This proposed version of the CRP would comply with international law and existing treaties by making it clear that any military training performed would not be done in preparation for another attempted invasion of Cuba by exile forces.[60] This version of the Cuban Refugee Program would have carried out the principal duties of the program as it already existed, but it would have also engaged in the creation of a pre-packaged state building apparatus.

So why did this new version of the program not coalesce? Most likely it was judged to be simply too unwieldy of a concept. The organizational structure for such a program would have required a massive bureaucracy and the expense would have dwarfed the impressive

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[59] "Revised Cuban Refugee Program," April 29, 1961, Folder Cuba, Subject Exiles 1961, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA. (hereafter JFK Library).

[60] "U.S. Policy Toward Cuban Exiles," May 3, 1961, Folder Cuba, Subject Exiles 1961, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.

expenditures of the Cuban Refugee Program in the 1960s. Some elements of the plan survived in altered forms, as when Cuban exiles were encouraged to join the armed forces of the United States in the early 1960s.[61] The greatest challenge to this plan was probably the conception its authors had of the Cuban exiles. The authors of the secret report wrote that most of the exiles believed that a swift return to Cuba was contingent on the United States being an active participant in the process and providing leadership for the endeavor. "Therefore," they concluded, "[the Cubans] can be expected to follow and support the U.S. in any venture promising an early elimination of Castro."[62] That American policymakers and intelligence officials would expect any group of exiles to blindly follow their directives is only mildly surprising. That American policymakers and intelligence officials would expect this blind allegiance in the aftermath of Bahia Cochinos is astounding.

Even in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs Invasion, the United States government felt, as many exiles still did, that it was only a matter of time until Castro's regime toppled in Cuba. The passage of time, however, solidified the need for the Cuban Refugee Program as a more stable institution. A series of congressional investigations into the Cuban Refugee question resulted in a report, in April 1962, which concluded that the Cuban Refugee Program could "no longer be regarded as a temporary or emergency matter."[63] Following these conclusions the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 was adopted in June of that year, formalizing the Cuban Refugee Program. When the Missile Crisis occurred the following October and the resolution of

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[61] This program is discussed in Chapter 3.
[62] "U.S. Policy Toward Cuban Exiles," May 3, 1961.
[63] Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Report of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate Made by its Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees Pursuant to S. Res. 50, Eighty-Seventh Congress First Session as Extended*, 87th Cong, 1st sess., 1962, S. Rep. 1328, 6.

the standoff over Soviet nuclear weapons on Cuban soil did not end with the removal of Fidel Castro from power, belief in a swift return to Cuba by the exiles was further diminished.

The aim of the program remained not only to aid those refugees who could not help themselves, but to cement the foundations for a new Cuba free of Castro and of Soviet influence. This was succinctly stated by a Kennedy administration insider when he testified before the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees on April 13, 1966. "Of course our entire refugee program has in one sense been an investment in the rebuilding of Cuba," Senator Robert F. Kennedy told the subcommittee, "the positive experience in this country of those thousands of Cubans who will choose to return to their native country will make a great difference in the future of the nation."[64] The Cuban Refugee Program, both in public and in private, was a fundamental cornerstone of American foreign policy towards Cuba. The refugee crisis was framed by local officials and activists in terms of the ideological arguments of the Cold War. In turn, the U.S. government sought to resolve it through the creation of a program that both explicitly and implicitly made the mundane experiences of Miami's residents political actions in a global conflict.

As the Cuban Refugee Program took shape as a large-scale endeavor, firmly entrenched in the structure of the welfare state, it became something far different from anything Tracy Voorhees had ever conceived of as a solution for Miami's problems. One of Voorhees's original conceptions did take hold and became one of the primary functions of the program: the

[64] Robert F. Kennedy, "Testimony of Senator Robert F. Kennedy Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees New York University Eisner and Lubin Auditorium," April 13, 1966, Folder 202, Box 27, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

resettlement of refugees to other parts of the United States. The program sought to ease tensions in South Florida, but many also considered that resettlement would be essential to imparting a true American experience to the refugees, particularly the younger ones. In his testimony before Congress in December of 1961, Senior Judge for the Dade County Juvenile Domestic Relations Court, W.R. Culbreath encouraged the relocation of Cuban families away from metropolitan areas and into small towns. Not only would any aid received by the refugees go further in a small town setting, but it might prevent any juvenile delinquency problems in the Miami area and impart small town American values on the young exiles. "I feel that the United States has in this group of young people the greatest possible potential of good relationships with Cuba and with the other Latin American countries," Culbreath stated to the Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees.[65]

Culbreath and likeminded individuals believed that in addition to solving and preventing problems on a local level, relocation would best serve American foreign policy goals. Other officials believed that the resettlement of the Cuban exiles would serve to awaken Americans "as nothing else has to the oppressions of communism." In a radio interview meant for Spanish speaking audiences in 1967, the director of the Cuban Refugee Center, Errol T. Ballanfonte told an interviewer that people in the Miami area were well aware of how articulate freedom loving Cubans could be in regards to the dangers of communism. "In scattering out to self-supporting opportunities all over this country," he went on, "Cuban refugees have told their convincing

[65] Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Report of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate Made by its Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees Pursuant to S. Res. 50, Eighty-Seventh Congress First Session as Extended*, 87th Cong, 1st sess., 1962, S. Rep. 1328, 117.

stories and alerted Americans by this first-hand information."[66] In sending the refugees to new communities and giving them new audiences for their personal stories, support for the Cold War at home could also be reinforced.

The Cuban Refugee Emergency Center provided office space for representatives of four different volunteer agencies engaged in the resettlement of refugees. Catholic Relief Services, the Protestant Latin American Emergency Committee of the Church World Service, the United Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Service, and the International Rescue Committee all worked to entice the refugees to resettle to other areas of the country. When a refugee came to register at the center, they were interviewed and classified by job skills, numbers of employable family members, friend or relatives living in the United States, and whether they desired voluntary agency assistance. After a medical examination they were interviewed by one of the four volunteer agencies based on religious preference or the desire to be aided by the secular International Rescue Committee. Social workers would interview and screen the refugees and certify their eligibility to receive monthly financial assistance checks for a maximum of $100 per family and $60 per single adult and for hospital care for acute illnesses.[67]

In order to find sound resettlement opportunities for the exiles, the CREC needed to inform the American public both of the plight of the Cuban refugees and of the resettlement program itself. In January of 1962 the program made comprehensive contact with daily newspapers around the country. That month more than 1,500 letters to the editors were sent with information about resettlement and operations of the center. The resulting news stories

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[66] Errol T. Ballanfonte, Interview with Tomas Garcia Fuste, February 17, 1967, Folder 91, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[67] "The Cuban Refugee Emergency Center: Its Programs and Operations," December, 1961, Folder 168, Box 8, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

and editorials helped increase consciousness about the Cuban exile situation and about the need for resettlement. The Center's media blitz also included over 4,000 envelopes addressed by the National Association of Broadcasters to all its members, completing a comprehensive coverage of all radio stations in the United States. By August of that year, the CREC had also sent 10 minute interview scripts to be conducted by an announcer and a local official or influential citizen regarding the program to 117 ABC television stations, 111 CBS stations, and 191 NBC stations.[68]

The Center's publicity campaign encouraged audiences to do their patriotic duty in helping to fight the Cold War by offering opportunities to the exiles. The program also sought to make inroads with local and state politicians around the nation by sending information packets to the governors of every state in the union and by sending a speaker to the Conference of Mayors held in Miami Beach in May of 1962.[69] It also engaged civic organizations around the country like the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce. Telegrams were sent to all "Jaycee" chapters and officers received "Make Mine Freedom" reminder cards reminding them about the Cuban Refugee Resettlement Program and that they should "talk it up next meeting."[70]

Seeing the reluctance of refugees to resettle to other areas of the country for fear of missing a swift return to Cuba, of colder climes, and of culture shock in leaving an area now densely populated by other Cubans, officials sought to both coerce and entice the exiles to

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[68] Cuban Refugee Center, "Public Information Activities Report, Cuban Refugee Center, Miami For Period January 1—August 20, 1962," Folder 187, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[69] Cuban Refugee Center, "Public Information Activities Report, Cuban Refugee Center, Miami For Period January 1—August 20, 1962."
[70] See Cuban Refugee Center, "Jaycee-a-gram," and Cuban Refugee Center, "Your 'Make Mine Freedom' Reminder," Folder 191, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

consider resettlement. The Cuban Refugee Program's public assistance aid for exiles in Miami was not unconditional. The CRP considered that exiles could be offered "sound" resettlement opportunities one of two ways. The exile could be offered suitable employment through a responsible sponsoring organization that was within their capacity to perform, conformed to fair labor standards and would not exposed them to undo hardship. They could also be offered a relocation opportunity by a responsible sponsoring organization that would guarantee their maintenance in decency and health until they could become self-supporting. If an exile was offered a sound resettlement opportunity and they refused the offer without "adequate cause," the refugee would be removed from public assistance rolls and become ineligible for any further cash assistance under the program.[71] If the exiles feared the changes that relocation would bring they were free to stay in Miami, but they would find themselves shut out from the more direct forms of assistance that the CRP had been created to provide.

Other exiles found little choice but to be resettled should they desire to be reunited with family members who had arrived before them. Following the Cuban Missile Crisis, the flow of refugees arriving in the United States slowed significantly due to the revolutionary government's decision to halt commercial air travel between Cuba and the United States. For a period of three years, ending in the fall of 1965, Cubans could only get to the United States by travelling to a third country and applying for a visa, by demonstrating sufficient medical need to have the Red Cross bring them to the U.S., or by crossing the Florida Straits by boat. During this phase between 30,000 and 50,000 Cubans arrived in the United States.[72] While the rate of migration slowed, the Refugee Center continued its efforts to relocate as many of the Cubans in the Miami area as they could. When Fidel Castro decided, in the fall of 1965, to open the port of

[71] "U.S. Cuban Refugee Program," Folder 71, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[72] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate,* 110.

Camarioca to family members of exiles who wanted to leave the country, some five thousand Cubans were brought across the Straits to Miami. In an effort to control the movement of refugees the Johnson Administration signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" with the Cuban government that allowed two daily flights of refugees from Varadero Beach to Miami. These "freedom flights" were in operation between December 1965 and April 1973 and brought approximately 340,000 new refugees to the United States.[73]

This agreement allowed both governments to place restrictions on who could make the journey for the first time. The American government prioritized family reunification, focusing on those potential exiles that already had family in the United States. Havana, meanwhile, refused to let men of military age, those citizens deemed essential to the economy, and political prisoners migrate to the United States.[74] This new influx of refugees only reignited the urgency of the resettlement program. Miami Mayor Robert King High appointed a committee of representatives to assess this new phase of the refugee crisis. The White House responded by meeting with representatives of the State Department and HEW to review and expand the resettlement program.[75] This, in turn, led to a reunification policy that had relocation as a prerequisite. For example, this family reunification focus served to reunite several of the Pedro Pan children with the parents they had not seen in years. In the first month of the Freedom Flights, December of 1965, the parents of 128 Pedro Pan children arrived in the United States, setting the stage for many reunions.[76] Because of the concerns in South Florida the federal government forced families to leave Miami if they wanted to reunite with their children. Most

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[73] Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 103-104.
[74] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate,* 110.
[75] Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 212.
[76] Conde, *Operation Pedro Pan*, 180.

parents with children living in other areas of the United States sought to have their children brought to Miami where they might have friends or relatives and where the culture shock would be far less than in other areas. Parents, however, were to be brought to their children instead of the children being brought to Miami.[77]

In addition to the more coercive measures they applied, officials at the Refugee Center also attempted to make relocation seem like an enticing possibility for the exiles. The Center regularly released a newsletter entitled *Resettlement Re-Cap*, which provided information on its efforts and included stories about successful resettlements throughout the country. The November 1962 issue, for example, told the story of Mr. and Mrs. Rigoberto Areces, who had been relocated to Nevada, Iowa, population 5,000. Mrs. Areces gave Spanish lessons to her neighbors as a way to improve her English and said of small town life that she and her husband "never really knew what family life was like here. Until we came to Iowa, we didn't know how nice American people are."[78] The Center reprinted stories from local newspapers about the ease with which resettled Cubans integrated into new communities. They distributed these stories in both English and Spanish in the Miami area. They also reached out to resettled Cubans in order to get positive statements about their resettlement experience. "The day we left Miami we were a bit scared," wrote Pedro Heng, who had relocated to Kansas City, Mo, "but now we feel at home and are very happy to be in this city. I work at Memorial Baptist Hospital

[77] There were some exceptions to this policy. When a new regulation was put in place that reunions had to take place within two weeks or the child would be brought to the parents in Miami, many unaccompanied minors were returned to their parents in South Florida. The Catholic Welfare agency, which had a long standing opinion that resettlement was not the only option, skirted these regulations and often brought children back to Miami before the two week period despite pressure from the federal government. See Torres, *The Lost Apple,* 212-213.

[78] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "New Life in Iowa Pleases Cuban Couple," *Resettlement Re-Cap*, November 1962, Folder 192, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

as a laboratory technician."[79] These stories, of course, never carried negative comments regarding any hardships, discrimination, or isolation that exiles might have experienced after being relocated from Miami.

In time, resettlement became a way for the Cuban Refugee Program to measure its own success. The literature released by the Program often updated statistics regarding resettlement. The *Resettlement Re-Cap* newsletter, in fact, carried a text box near its masthead entitled "The Score." For the week ending on September 28, 1962, the newsletter indicated that 2,044 refugees had registered at the Center that week, 963 refugees had been resettled, that since January 1961, 150,544 refugees had registered at the Center, of those 44,258 had been resettled, and that over 100,000 refugees remained in the Miami area.[80] By May of 1963, a program press release was proudly proclaiming that with the resettlement to Alaska of a 20 year old Cuban who claimed not to fear the cold, the resettlement program had touched every state in the Union.[81] Resettlement figures also played a significant role in the weekly fact sheets published by the Program regarding its activities. With the increased emphasis on relocation that came with the establishment of the Freedom Flights, the CRP gave particular attention to the ratio of resettlement based on new arrivals.

By the end of 1970, the Program's materials classified its operations into three time periods. The first from February of 1961 until the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962 saw 153,534 registrations and 48,361 resettlements. The time period between the missile crisis and

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[79] Pedro Heng, "El Miedo de Abandonar Miami Se Volvio Felicidad," Folder 186, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[80] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "The Score," *Resettlement Re-Cap*, October 1962, Folder 192, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[81] U.S. Cuban Refugee Center press release, May 7, 1963, Folder 25, Box 2, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

December 1, 1965 had 29,962 registrations and 46,547 resettlements. And the family reunion phase consisting of 2,555 flights from Varadero to Miami between December of 1965 and December 31, 1970 had 236,521 refugee arrivals and 172,343 resettlements. Overall, between February 1961 and December 1970 the center reported 420,390 registrations and 267,251 resettlements. The center proudly reported that the rate of resettlement for Freedom Flight refugees was 73.0% while the overall resettlement rate was 73.1%.[82] What these figures and statistics did not convey was that the CRP did not track any statistics regarding the return of resettled Cubans to the Miami area.[83] Cuban refugees were told in no uncertain terms that if they resettled, they would become ineligible for any further aid should they move back to the Miami area.[84] As such, they had little reason to report to the Refugee Center or to provide the institution any information if they returned to South Florida. Another problem with the statistics provided by the Cuban Refugee Program is that they were entirely based on those exiles that chose to register at the Center. A 1965 study, derived from statistics produced by the immigration and Naturalization Service, indicated that while 85,465 Cubans had registered at the Refugee Center, 94,987 had settled in Dade County without assistance.[85]

As time went on, the Cuban government put more restrictions on immigration and the educational and social composition of the exiles changed. As exiles with fewer resources and less training arrived in the area a greater percentage of refugees must have sought assistance from the center. The center was unable to formally track these statics due to the lack of

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[82] Cuban Refugee Program, "Fact Sheet," December 31, 1970, Folder 14, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[83] There are few statistics on this phenomenon, though it seems to be widespread. It will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

[84] J. A. Lazell to Voluntary Agencies and State Welfare Department, presumably 1962, Folder 5, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[85] Cuban Refugee Center, "Initial Study of Cuban Refugee Profile Dade County, Florida," September 1965, Folder 169, Box 8, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

information gathering procedures involving the entire refugee population. It was well established, however, is that there remained a significant and growing Cuban exile population in the city of Miami despite the federal government's efforts to encourage resettlement. This required a significant investment from the Cuban Refugee Program in the form of economic disbursements not only in the form of direct aid, but also through subsidies for relocation, medical care, and other services.

The costs of the Program rapidly escalated after President Eisenhower's original $1,000,000 appropriation and the additional $4,000,000 that President Kennedy provided for the first six months of 1961. Kennedy then allocated $13,560,000 for the remaining six months ending on December 31, 1961.[86] The total appropriations for the years 1962-1965 totaled $141,901,869.[87] Ultimately, the Cuban Refugee Program disbursed approximately $2,000,000,000 in aid and provided relief for more than 700,000 Cubans in the United States.[88] Direct aid for individual refugees and for families continued at a rate of $60 maximum per individual case and $100 per family until July of 1971 when new maximums of $86 and $246 were enacted.[89] This direct aid helped to revitalize the local economy.

There was another source of direct payment for a sector of the Cuban exile community which had a significant effect on Miami's economy. The University of Miami's South Campus was the site of a cluster of office buildings and warehouses, which was allegedly the site of Defense Department weapons system research, publicly known as Zenith Technological

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[86] Statistics from the Cuban Refugee Program, "U.S. Cuban Refugee Program," February 6, 1962, Folder 71, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[87] Holborn, "The Cuban Refugee Program: Its Development and Implementation," July 31, 1965.
[88] Miguel A. De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 37.
[89] U.S. Cuban Refugee Center press release, May 28, 1971, Folder 35, Box 2, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

Services. This entity was one of South Florida's largest employers between 1962 and 1968. Zenith Technological Services was actually the front for an operation known to insiders as JM/WAVE, the largest Central Intelligence Agency installation in the world outside of CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. JM/WAVE employed thousands of Cuban agents and maintained hundreds of pieces real estate in the Miami area.[90] Operation Mongoose, the Kennedy directed plan to destabilize the Castro regime was run out of these facilities, involving more than 500 caseworkers handling over 3,000 Cuban exile agents at a cost of over $100,000,000 a year. These funds allowed for the establishment and operation of over fifty-four front businesses.[91] The full extent of the CIA's economic influence over the Miami area in the 1960s has yet to be fully understood as the records regarding JM/WAVE and most of these operations remain sealed. What is certain is that the economic disbursements related to the Agency's presence in the South Florida further augmented the funds provided by the Cuban Refugee Program.

The Cuban Refugee Program's influence over the Miami metropolitan area went well beyond direct payments issued to qualifying exiles and their families. An essential element of the program was to aid the exiles in securing economic self-sufficiency. Given the socioeconomic makeup of the early exile waves and the belief among federal officials that the skills of those professional and educated exiles needed to be maintained, particular efforts were made on behalf of the those exiles with the greatest levels of education and experience. Among those refugees who registered for assistance at the Center there were a significant number with professional and semi-professional occupations. As of March 1963, the registered refugees with professional occupations broke down in the following way:

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[90] William R. Amlong, "How the CIA Operated in Dade," *Miami Herald*, March 9, 1975.
[91] De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba,* 40-41.

**Professional and Semi-Professional Occupations**[92]

| Occupation | Total | Percent of Registration |
|---|---|---|
| Accountant—Bookkeepers | 2,009 | 2.3% |
| Architects | 208 | 0.2% |
| Chemists | 115 | 0.1% |
| Dentists | 283 | 0.3% |
| Engineers (all types) | 556 | 0.7% |
| Lawyers | 1,770 | 2.0% |
| Pharmacists | 542 | 0.6% |
| Physicians | 1,051 | 1.3% |
| Professors (University Level) | 498 | 0.6% |
| Teachers (elementary and secondary) | 2,937 | 3.4% |
| **Total Professionals and Semi-Professionals Registered** | 9,969 | 11.5% |

The potential economic benefit for the United States represented by the education and experience contained in these early waves, the so called "Golden Exiles" was tremendous. This was well understood by federal officials and by the exiles themselves. "No other country in the world has ever been so fortunate to receive the cream of the crop from another society," stated Manuel Gonzalez-Mayo, a Cuban veterinarian, when questioned by a researcher in 1969. "It takes $85,000 to produce a new doctor - - a green beginner - - in this country, Gonzalez- Mayo went on, "but the United States has got more than 2,000 experienced M.D.'s from Cuba, as a gift."[93] In order for the United States to receive this gift, the Cuban Refugee Program had to take steps to ensure the exiles' training would not be wasted.

Starting in early 1961, federal authorities began working with the University of Miami's Medical School to create a program that would allow exile physicians to practice their

[92] Cuban Refugee Center, "Socio-Economic Characteristics of Refugees Registered at the Center," Folder 13, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[93] John Egerton, "Cubans in Miami: A Third Dimension in Racial and Cultural Relations," November 1969, Folder 111, Box 39, Series IV, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

profession in the United States. The faculty of the University of Havana School of Medicine in exile joined with the Faculty of the School of Medicine of the University of Miami to establish a program tailored to meet the group and individual needs of these physicians. The program included English language courses for the physicians established by special arrangement with the UM's School of Languages and with Barry College. Explaining their aspirations, creators of the initiative hoped "that as a result of helping them continue their education, they will be exposed to the most lasting and valuable impression of Democracy that is possible."[94]

By the fifth course of the program, starting on January 3, 1963, the medical school saw an enrollment of 130 physicians from 12 Latin American countries, 114 of whom were Cuban exiles. Representing 14 medical specialties, these doctors hoped to take the course and pass the Emergency Council for Foreign Medical Graduates' Examination. The ECFMG certificate was necessary for foreign trained physicians to practice medicine in the United States and each subsequent course of the University of Miami's program saw greater and greater success in the percentage of students who obtained this certification. The first course, from January to March of 1961, had a success rate of 67%. By the fourth course, held between July and October of 1962, the graduates obtaining the ECFMG certification reached 80%. By March of 1963 the faculty expected that 110 physicians from the program would obtain their certification, be qualified to work in American medical institutions, and would share with their friends "knowledge of how education was used to advance the cause of democracy."[95]

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[94] University of Miami School of Medicine, "Interim Report of the Bilingual and Translation Sub-Section of the Postgraduate Medical Education Program," February 16, 1961, Folder 1, Box 25, Series II—Pearson Administration, Office of the President Records (Collection No. U0064), University Archives—University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida (hereafter UM Archives).

[95] University of Miami School of Medicine, "Postgraduate Medical Education for Latin American Physicians University of Havana School of Medicine in Exile University of Miami School of Medicine," February 15,

The program began as a University of Miami project and was largely funded through private donations.[96] After the establishment of the Cuban Refugee Program, the University began working with the federal government on this project and received a grant from the Department of Health Education and Welfare to fund its operations. Over 2500 Cuban doctors would make their way through the program with the majority obtaining the certification to practice medicine in the United States.[97] This allowed for the accreditation of well educated, often very experienced medical doctors in the United States for a cost of $384 per physician.[98] By 1963, even with federal authorities pushing for resettlement, at least 18% of the newly accredited physicians had found work in the Miami area.[99] Not only did this benefit the Miami area, allowing for a greater concentration of medical professionals locally, but it often provided great successes for the resettlement program to tout in encouraging the relocation of exiles from the area. This was the case when the refugee program reprinted a November 1967 story from the *Kansas Kansan* about how Dr. Alfredo L. Hernandez, a Cuban psychiatrist, had been named the new chief of the main section at Osawatomie State Hospital.[100] Accreditation allowed exile physicians access to work in their field and to further opportunities as

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1963, Folder 1, Box 25, Series II—Pearson Administration, Office of the President Records (Collection No. U0064), UM Archives.

[96] "Fleeing Cuban Doctors Here Given $60,000 In Study Aids," *The Miami Hurricane*, February 10, 1961.

[97] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 26.

[98] University of Miami School of Medicine, "Postgraduate Medical Education for Latin American Physicians University of Havana School of Medicine in Exile University of Miami School of Medicine," February 15, 1963.

[99] Rafael Peñalver, "Cuban Refugee Physicians: An Interview with Rafael Penalver, M.D.," March 1963, Folder 164, Box 7, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[100] "Cuban Doctor Named To State Hospital Post," *Kansas Kansan*, November 3, 1967, reprinted by U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, Folder 186, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

organizations like the American Medical Association established revolving funds for loans to Cuban physicians attending postgraduate programs.[101]

Not all Cuban professionals had the same opportunities to engage in the fields in which they were trained. In February of 1961, after having laid the groundwork for the training of the Cuban physicians, the University of Miami was making plans to extend the same type of training opportunities to the significant number of Cuban lawyers among the refugees.[102] There was a stumbling block for the refugee lawyers in that the English system of common law that was prevalent in the United States was significantly different from the codes that served as the basis of Cuban law. In March of 1961, the American Bar Association sought to help the exile lawyers by establishing a special committee to help Cuban lawyers, judges, and legal scholars to find employment as teachers, librarians, and legal counsel in corporations. Unfortunately, if a Cuban lawyer wanted to enter private practice in any state they would be required to start their legal education over in an American Law School. It was not until 1973 that the University of Florida and the University of Miami created an intensive eighteen month training program specifically for Cuban lawyers that allowed them to graduate with an American law degree.[103]

The Cuban Refugee Center sought to find employment for these refugee attorneys in alternate fields. As part of their *Resettlement Re-Cap*, the Center asked potential employers "a Cuban lawyer as a Spanish language teacher? Why not?" The Center sought to urge Cuban lawyers who were sufficiently qualified in English and who could not use their advanced

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[101] Peñalver, "Cuban Refugee Physicians," March 1963.
[102] Homer F. Marsh and Ralph Jones to Jay F.W. Pearson, February 9, 1961, Folder 1, Box 25, Series II—Pearson Administration, Office of the President Records (Collection No. U0064), UM Archives.
[103] García, *Havana USA*, 28.

university training in jobs related to the law to undertake teaching.[104] Starting in January of 1963, a new program was established at the University of Miami's School of Education under the direction of Associate Dean Herbert W. Wey and with financial support from the Welfare Administration. This was followed by the creation of other programs to teach English to Cuban exiles so they could become Spanish educators at Indiana University, the College of Great Falls, Montana, and Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, among others. A significant number of the exiles who participated in these programs were former lawyers.[105]

Similar programs were attempted for optometrists and dentists among the exiles.[106] Dentists faced greater difficulties than medical doctors. Cuban refugees were able to obtain student loans if they were admitted to dental schools. Cuban dentists, however, had to return to dental school and be evaluated by the school in regards to what standing they would be allowed. If a dentist entered dental school with a third year standing or better and they were residents of Miami when they entered then they were eligible for maintenance grants from the Cuban Refugee Program, this in addition to student loans.[107] This is indicative of the difficulties faced by Cubans in certain professions, but it also illustrates the availability of student loans under the U.S. Loan Program for Cuban Students, which used funds made available by the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962 and which were administered along the same guidelines as other government student loan programs in the United States. In order for an institution to be eligible to be eligible for these funds, they had to be participating in the National Defense Student Loan Program or to meet the eligibility criteria for participation in that

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[104] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "The Score," *Resettlement Re-Cap*, February 1963, Folder 192, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[105] Louise W. Holborn, "The Cuban Refugee Program: Its Development and Implementation," July 31, 1965.
[106] *Ibid*.
[107] Antonio A. Miccocci to Norman R.A. Alley, August 4, 1965, Folder 257, Box 13, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

program. A three percent interest rate would be accrued on the unpaid balance of the loans twelve months after the refugee stopped being a full time student.[108]

Access to educational opportunities for the exiles went beyond the Program's profession-specific initiatives and the subsidies paid to Dade County public schools. The push for exile self-sufficiency was particularly important in the Miami market, now flooded with exiles either already on public assistance rolls or who might be potentially added to them at any moment. One of the most significant obstacles for exiles attempting to find work in an American marketplace was the language barrier. Just as intensive language programs were established as part of programs geared for professionals, English language courses were established and made available to any adult exile in the Miami area that chose to participate in them. The Refugee Center made card sized fliers to hand out to exiles visiting the facilities that asked in Spanish "Are you improving your English?" The Center advertised free extension classes available day and night and listed several junior and senior high schools and educational centers where adult exiles could work to attain a greater grasp of the English language. At the bottom of each card the exile recipient was reminded that "Opportunities come more quickly to those refugees that help themselves."[109] English language training was thus positioned as a cornerstone of financial self-reliance and independence from the program.

Locally available training for the potential exile workforce went beyond these English language classes. The center provided training that would allow professional and semi-professional Cubans to enter the marketplace either in their own professions or in professions

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[108] Loans Branch, DSFA, Bureau of Higher Education to Institutions of Higher Education, March 15, 1967, Folder 257, Box 13, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[109] U.S. Cuban Refugee Center, "Are you improving your English?," undated, Folder 18, Box 1, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

where they could use some of the skills they had acquired over the years. It sought to do the same with skilled and unskilled laborers who had come to the United States as refugees. The first step in this process was to sort out what skills and aptitudes exiles had for placement in industrial and service jobs. The Center was the site of 75 weekly aptitude tests administered by the U.S. Employment Service to identify "men and women whose manual dexterity and fast reactions can be directed toward a variety of skills." This allowed center personnel to offer enticing candidates to manufacturers providing with-pay training courses, ideally setting the refugees on a path to a well-paying job and self-sufficiency. The staff also reached out to out-of-state manufacturers, noting that exiles had already been sent to shoe factories in New England, clothing makers in New York State, and electronics producers in Texas, but many of the exiles would wind up using these skills and aptitudes to gain jobs in local manufacturing concerns.[110]

The Center also offered new skillsets to individuals who had never before held jobs in manufacturing or in the service industry. While many of the exiles were able to achieve success, the Cuban Refugee Program established an initiative for those that had been left behind. This was particularly important for the significant number of exile women who were the heads of their families in the United States. The "Training for Independence" program started in July of 1964 when 1475 women started intensive English classes as a precursor to vocational training aimed at ending dependence on public assistance. For the eight to nine months of the course, each student received two and a half hours of intensive English instruction five times a week before they could proceed to further training. Cuban Refugee Center officials had found that female heads of household were characterized by low educational levels. Seventy one percent of these women had less than a high school education. A similar percentage had no knowledge

[110] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "Attention Manufacturers!," *Resettlement Re-Cap*, September 1962, Folder 192, Box 9, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

of the English language. Among this group, 33% were married but without a spouse in Miami: most of their husbands were still in Cuba or in some country other than the United States, leaving the women as the only source of support for their children.[111]

While the stated aim of the Training for Independence program was to establish "a new approach to the problems of dependency," the official attitude of the program registered a heavy dose of paternalism in its description of the women interviewed to participate in the program. Officials in the program directly compared them to the American mothers served by the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program and found their reactions to their situation similar. "Many were unable to face reality and, while unhappy in their ghetto slum," read a report on the program encased in a glossy booklet, "had only vague and improbably dreams of how their lives might ultimately change for the better." In order to ensure that these women would participate in the program, they were forced to enroll in the project or they would cease to be eligible for financial assistance from CRP. While the Program described the way in which many Cuban women actively and enthusiastically sought out participation in the Training for Independence initiative, they also gave examples of those who had to be coerced into it. This was the case of a woman the program referred to as Mrs. H, a 30 year old Cuban refugee with three children under the age of ten who had been on public assistance for three years when she was brought into the program. Mrs. H was described as "an obese, slatternly-looking woman, with only two years of formal education," who lived in a dingy bedroom equipped with a gas plate and a refrigerator. According to the Program's narrative, Mrs. H was far from interested in the slow and arduous process of gaining independence by learning English

[111] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "A Narrative History of 'Training for Independence,'" March 1967, Folder 76, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

and a trade. "It would have been difficult to enable her to become employable," the Program's writers went on, "even if she had been genuinely interested in achieving independence."[112]

Mrs. H was portrayed as being frequently absent from the program despite being provided with child care during class hours. The narrative claimed she had attempted to "buy" her way out of the program multiple times. On one occasion she was reported to have written President Lyndon B. Johnson a letter requesting he send her an automobile as a present, explaining it was her lack of a car that kept her from earning a living for her children. When her caseworker questioned her about the letter, Mrs. H "admitted that she did not know how to drive a car and had no plans for using it, but she still felt that if the president would give her one, all her problems would somehow be solved." Ultimately, Mrs. H was able to complete the language training and a course in laundry work, but kept missing job opportunities until her caseworker forced her to meet a prospective employer. The silver lining to the story, as explained by the program, was that a few months later the agency received a letter from the employer lauding Mrs. H's work and asking if any other workers of her caliber were available.[113]

The officials of the Cuban Refugee Program sought to illustrate the effectiveness of their plan to bring the destitute out of a state of dependency and into self-sufficiency. The Program's narrative of the Cuban exodus had been that it was, as John F. Tomas, Director of the CRP's Social and Rehabilitation Service, described it, a "a top flight migration" of people with "special talents, ambition and initiative."[114] Thomas was describing the upper classes of the Cuban refugees and how they had integrated themselves into American society with relative ease.

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[112] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "Training for Independence: A New Approach to the Problems of Dependency," 1967, Folder 11, Box 35, Series IV, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "A Narrative History of 'Training for Independence,'" March 1967.

Other refugees found in the narratives of Training for Independence well fit in the long established mold of the "worthy poor," who actively sought to escape their situation.

In the case of Cuban women like Mrs. H, the program sought to liken them to another segment of American society by comparing their situation to that of women who received assistance through the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program. This comparison had a very intentional purpose. The Program's publication, "Training for Independence: A New Approach to the Problems of Dependency," claimed that the project had been successful in "virtually eliminating the problem of hard core poverty among the individuals in this group." Their study of the initiative was meant to provide ideas and encouragement to community leaders, welfare officials, and employment specialists in dealing with problems of extreme poverty because Cuban Miami served as a social laboratory where they could conduct experiments in order to understand larger society issues. "In this Cuban group," wrote Cuban Refugee Program Director Howard H. Palmatier, "all the complexities of the problem of hard core poverty are reduced to a scale which facilitates study and comprehension."[115] By instituting an initiative that used government funds to provide child care, education, and work placement, the Cuban Refugee Program sought to provide for the larger Department of Health Education and Welfare and for officials and activists throughout the nation a model by which to tackle one of the major issues of the larger War on Poverty. The hybrid nature of the CRP allowed officials to serve American foreign policy aims through welfare programs that they, in turn, believed could be mimicked and used to address the some of the major problems facing the welfare state.

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[115] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "Training for Independence: A New Approach to the Problems of Dependency," 1967.

The Training for Independence initiative produced tangible successes for the Cuban Refugee Center beyond an attempt to influence the rest of the HEW structure. Of the 3,800 women who initially qualified for the program, 2,103, approximately 55%, had been removed from the financial assistance rolls by June of 1965. A small, mixed-gender group of Cubans ages 56-64 were also included in the program and by that same month nearly 20% of them had been removed from the assistance rolls.[116] The vocational schooling provided by the Training for Independence initiative allowed women to receive training in the hotel industry, childcare, and upholstery work. It also had clerical courses that included lessons in typing, filing, bookkeeping, and general office practices. It also provided training in industrial power sewing machine operation.[117]

This last form of training was particularly important because it allowed the women who chose this path to become part of a larger trend that saw Cuban women enlivening Miami's garment industry. Before 1960 most of the labor in the city's small garment industry was performed by "snowbirds," elderly garment workers from the East Coast who spent their winters in Florida. Things changed significantly after the surge in refugee arrivals. By November of 1967, there were some 350 clothing factories operating in the Greater Miami area, ranging from large industrial plants to small, sparsely equipped family shops. Operating in two garment districts located in Northwestern Miami and Hialeah, this industry employed more than 12,000 workers. Over 85% of these workers were Cubans who worked in the manufacture of a great variety of garments, principally women's and children's wear. For the fiscal year ending on June 30, 1967, the value of garment production had exceeded $120,000,000. This annual output

[116] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "Cuban Refugee Program Annual Report—1965," Folder 72, Box 4, Series I, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[117] U.S. Cuban Refugee Program, "Training for Independence: A New Approach to the Problems of Dependency," 1967.

had been growing at an annual rate of 15% for the previous three years, and it had made Miami the third largest garment center in the nation, rapidly approaching a position in which it would challenge California for second place. One Miami garment executive told a reporter that the only time he could thank Fidel Castro was when he thought of what an asset the Cuban refugees had been to his industry. Another spoke to the almost magical skills of Cuban women in working in the manufacturing of clothing, stating that his company had operators who had never worked a day in their lives but who immediately adapted themselves to industrial work. He then went on to list the reasons that made South Florida so appealing to the garment industry, the first of which was the ample Cuban labor supply. While it was an industry still seeking stability, the presence of the Cubans was credited with its explosive growth.[118]

This was not the only time that the presence of the Cubans, and their access to structures of privilege granted to them by the federal government, would make an impact on Miami's economy. Early on during the refugee crisis, there had been many who expressed fear that the influx of the refugees would only exacerbate the economic recession in the city. An economic study published by the University of Miami in 1967, however, attributed the economic stagnation from 1960 to 1964 to two earlier sharp declines in economic activity in both the tourist and building industries related to the national recession in 1958. The study found that the refugees did cause a significant amount of economic dislocation. When the Cuban refugees moved into areas with large number of vacancies and improved lagging housing occupancy they changed the consumption patterns for local businesses. This caused some of them to fail or move. The researchers also found that the exile community had a significant impact on the city's economy through their entrepreneurial activities once they were properly established in

[118] "Cuban Labor Fueling Growth of Miami's Busy Garment Industry," *New York Times*, November 19, 1967.

South Florida. "With the passing of time," the researchers found, "methods for establishing credit for business and business loans in the absence of credit records and references from Cuba have been developed and Cuban participation in the business community has been increasing."[119]

The practice of obtaining loans through references from Cuba came to be known as "character loans." Carlos Arboleya, who had been a banker in Cuba before coming to the United States, claimed to have started this practice. Arboleya's story was reminiscent of those of other Cubans who were highly educated or highly experienced. Arriving in Miami on Halloween night 1960, Arboleya found that no bank would give him a job. He, instead, went to work at a shoe factory and rapidly rose through the ranks. After a year and a half at the factory, he was offered a position at Boulevard National Bank, where he rose to the position of executive vice-president. Arboleya would go on to become the first Cuban president of an American bank, Fidelity National Bank. When Arboleya rose to positions of authority within these financial organizations he began the practice of character loans. When a Cuban refugee would come to Arboleya seeking a loan to start a business, Arboleya based his decision on the man's character and reputation. If he knew that the applicant had had a business of the same type in Cuba and that he was a man of good character, he felt compelled to aid the exile. "Their financial state did not warrant a loan," Arboleya later recalled, "but this person's character, and experience, and life did warrant it."[120] Most professional exiles had lost their wealth in fleeing from Cuba after the Revolution, but as members of the community attained wealth and the clout to aid

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[119] The Research Institute for Cuba and the Caribbean Center for Advanced International Studies, "The Cuban Immigration 1959-1966 and Its Impact on Miami-Dade County, Florida," January 31, 1967, Folder 59.1, Box 33, Series III, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[120] Carlos Arboleya, interview by Julio Estorino, August 17, 2010, Cuban Heritage Collection Luis J. Botifoll Oral History Project, CHC.

new arrivals they found they had carried with them an asset in the form of the history they shared with other exiles of the same class.

Entrepreneurial exiles also received aid from the federal government in establishing new businesses through loans from the Small Business Administration. Statistics on the loans granted by this organization between 1968 and 1979 show that Hispanics received 46.9% of available funds, totaling $47,677,660. By comparison, Euroamericans received 46.6% of the available funds, while African Americans received 6.3%.[121] While there were fluctuations in the composition of Miami's Hispanic population over the years, by 1970 this population was estimated to be 87.3% Cuban.[122] If Cubans were the recipients of a comparable percentage of the total funds that went to Hispanics, this suggests that this group received approximately 41% of the total available funds. Regardless of whether the funding came from the SMA, a character loan, some other privately secured loan, or another source, Cuban businessmen and women opened a significant number of new businesses in the Miami area. By 1971, ten years after the creation of the Cuban Refugee Program, the Miami area had close to 6,000 Cuban owned businesses.[123]

In the early 1960s, the Cuban refugee influx had added thousands of new Hispanic residents to Dade County, most of who had been in need of aid from the established Cuban community or the federal government. By the latter half of the decade, market studies were being commissioned to properly measure the spending power of this market in Dade County. A study conducted by First Research Company in 1970 found significant growth in the total annual

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[121] De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba,* 38.
[122] First Research Company, "The Latin Market (Dade County Florida) 1970 Report," 1970, Folder 105, Box 39, Series IV, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[123] George Volsky, "Cuban Refugees Mark '61 Invasion," *New York Times*, April 18, 1971.

income of the county's Spanish language origin households. The survey, carried out for the third consecutive year, found that the annual figure of $588,000,000 represented an increase of about $246,000,000 in the period from mid-1968 to the end of September 1970. While the number of Hispanic households increased by 37.3% from 59,500 to 81,695 in the same time period, the increase in total income was of nearly 72%, outpacing the growth in population. By the start of the 1970s the Hispanic population in Miami had high levels of car ownership and 38.9% of them owned their own home.[124]

These economic indicators suggest a massive change from the first two years of the refugee crisis. Within ten years, what had been a destitute population had gained, through access to structures of privilege usually denied to minority groups and migrants and through their social composition, education, experience, and entrepreneurship, a significant share of the economic power in Dade County. By serving the needs of the U.S. national security apparatus, the Cuban Refugee Program set the Cuban exiles and the Miami on a path towards economic growth. This, however, does not mean that either the national security officials who began the program or the Cubans themselves felt particularly satisfied with the way this arrangement unfolded. On a local level, the empowerment of the Cuban community challenged the established social order, and prompted confrontations between the exiles and Miami's African American and white residents. As the refugee community navigated international, national, and local politics, the stage was set for a political transformation of Miami that rivaled the demographic and economic metamorphoses that came about because of the intersection between the national security and welfare states in South Florida.

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[124] First Research Company, "The Latin Market (Dade County Florida) 1970 Report," 1970.

# CHAPTER 3—"A POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE MIX": RACE, CITIZENSHIP, AND EXILE POLITICS AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS, 1965-1972

In July of 1972, the *New York Times* ran a piece on how Miami's "long-passive" refugees were becoming active in local political life. The *Times* estimated the Cuban population in Miami at around 300,000 people. Some 80,000 Cubans were eligible to vote, but only about half of them were registered to do so. There was, however, a drive to register as many eligible Cubans as possible in time for the presidential election later that year. The drive for registration was seen as problematic by the Democratic Party, given that 80% of the Cubans who registered to vote also registered as Republicans. The *Times* contrasted a number of Cuban civic groups that had sprung up in the city to the "now moribund anti-Castro organizations of the 1960s," stating that the new groups were principally aimed at participating in community affairs. The newspaper of record informed its readers that the Cuban community was now led by a younger group of exiles who had come of age in the United States; men like Manolo Reboso, the recently-appointed, first Cuban-born member of the Miami City Commission. Another young leader, Armando Lacasa, stated that Cubans were the largest minority in Dade County, and that "in a short time we have attained an economic power, and now we have to unite to attain political power." This union, however, was far from assured as differing Cuban factions were in competition for power and influence over a united Cuban voting bloc. Regardless, these

struggles were framed as a new, local political force coming into being; one which had forsaken the counterrevolutionary struggle of the past to focus on their present in Miami.[1]

The *Times* correctly identified the growing influence of the Cuban community in South Florida and an evolution in its politics. The article accentuated a separation between the politics of exile and the politics of an inchoate Cuban American community. The piece prematurely declared the death of the exile organizations that directly engaged the Castro regime in order to drive it from Cuba. What the author failed to identify was that the change in political direction by Miami's Cubans in the late 1960s and early 1970s was simply a new manifestation of the same world view and the same desire for a Castro-free Cuba. The access to economic opportunity created by the Cuban Refugee Program and other endeavors of the federal government allowed the Cuban community to harness increasing social and economic power in South Florida. The troubled history of exile political organizations with the federal government in the early 1960s set the stage for a new approach to Cuban politics in South Florida, one that used the community's local clout as a springboard to influence American policy.

The event that tied these two trends and which permanently married the politics of exile with local politics in Miami was the passage of the Cuban Adjustment Act in 1966. This piece of legislation solidified the exiles' access to the structures of privilege offered by the federal government: a path to citizenship through permanent residency in the United States. Exile politics were complex and divided in the 1960s, but the experience of the refugees on a local and national level informed how individuals and groups made the politics of the Cold War as local as they were global. Likewise, the presence of the exiles and their actions affected the way in which the federal government reacted to their initiatives and how Miami's black and

[1] "Cubans in Miami Press for Power," *New York Times*, July 29, 1972.

white communities regarded the exile and the federal intervention in their city. The Cuban presence and the federal aid they received were transgressive to the established social order in Miami. Once a path to citizenship was open, this transgression became a new and unstable social order. It also created a larger Cuban American community that sought to influence American foreign policy not as an outside group making demands of a host state, but as a voting bloc that could mobilize influence for friendly candidates in local and legislative elections.

This process led to a specific set of historic circumstances that publicly associated the growing Cuban American community to the Republican Party. Many scholars and casual commentators have portrayed the rapport between these two groups as being based on some natural conservatism inherent in the Cuban exile or being due to some un-bridgeable chasm that followed the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion. While there were some very vocal conservative elements in the Cuban American community, both of the major political parties in the United States were invested in anti-communism in the 1950s and 1960s. Likewise, while John F. Kennedy's "betrayal" of the Cuban cause was a significant obstacle to future relations between the Democratic Party and the exile community, exile organizations continued to clash with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations as they sought free reign in their struggle against the Castro regime. This narrative of the Democrats and the Cubans Americans being permanently at odds was ultimately accepted by both Democrats and Republicans in Dade County, leading to an institutional abandonment of the Cuban Americans as a Democratic constituency and the creation of a superior Republican recruitment effort in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In the early 1960s, federal policy makers were forced to balance their desire to see the Cuban revolutionary government toppled with their concerns regarding directly engaging the Soviet Union and with fears of another embarrassment on the level of the Bay of Pigs Invasion. While American policymakers could sympathize with the exiles and saw them as comrades in arms in the global struggle of the Cold War, Cuba was a single battleground in a larger conflict and not the dream that drove them. Scholars of the Cuban exile often focus on this division when attempting to understand the complex history of relations between the anti-Castro Cubans and the U.S. government. Sociologist Silvia Pedraza described the relationship between the United States, Cuba, and the exiles in terms of an "impossible triangle."[2] The relationship between Cuban home regime, the North American host regime, and the exile community was indeed an impossible triangle because any attempt at relations between two corners of the triangle results in the alienation of the third corner. Because of this, the exiles have often felt betrayed by the host state when its relations with the home state become more important than its relations with the exiles. The Bay of Pigs Invasion was the first perceived betrayal of the exile cause.[3]

The question of whether or not to establish a Cuban government in exile in the United States, for example, would seem to fit securely within Pedraza's model. The United States government had officially warned the exiles that it would tolerate no attempt to set up a government in exile in the United States in late 1959. A representative of the State Department informed the media that they had been spurred by reports of a government in exile being prepared by supporters of Dr. Emilio Nuñez Portundo. The establishment of a foreign

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[2] Pedraza bases this model on the work of French sociologist Stéphane Dufoix. See Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 283.
[3] Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus,* 284-285.

government in American territory "without the consent of the United States would violate the sovereignty of the United States and run counter to international law," warned spokesman Lincoln White.[4] In this case the host state was avoiding antagonizing the home state at the expense of the exile community.

At the same time, the Eisenhower administration was trying not to tip its hand about any future plans it might have for the end of Castro's regime. By openly rebuking Nuñez Portundo's followers it was ensuring that whatever *de facto* government in exile ultimately took control of the combined Cuban exile efforts would be compatible with long term American interests in Latin America. In addition, this rebuke did not permanently eliminate the possibility of a Cuban government in exile in the United States. In the lead-up to the invasion, the Kennedy administration created a government in exile in-everything-but-title in the guise of the Cuban Revolutionary Council. José Miró Cardona, formerly the first Prime Minister of the revolutionary government, was elected as head of the CRC. This infuriated many in the Cuban exile right who claimed that the CRC's platform was "*Fidelismo* without Fidel."[5]

While the Kennedy administration meant to unify the exiles and to benefit them at the expense of their home state, it ultimately ran into the problem that the exiles did not have a unified political leaning outside of a general opposition to Fidel Castro. In the fractured landscape of Cuban exile politics, the Cuban Revolutionary Council was one of the most ambitious attempts at unifying the anti-Castro Cubans living in exile. The CRC, however, was not up to the task of unifying the many different organizations that emerged in the United States. By May, 1962 the CIA reported that over 200 anti-Castro organizations had been formed in Cuba

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[4] "U.S. Warns Cuban Exiles," *New York Times*, November 4, 1959.
[5] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 123-125.

or among Cuban exiles in other countries, most prevalently in the United States. "The exile community, divided and quarrelsome," explained the Agency's report, "forms into groups and organizations, breaks up, disappears and reforms in a kaleidoscopic picture which varies from week to week."[6] In October of that year, the CIA provided National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy with a handbook "designed to provide an abbreviated read reference to pertinent available information concerning known Cuban Counterrevolutionary organizations." This abbreviated guide was 102 pages long.[7]

The lack of Cuban unity was not the determining factor in the failure of the operation the CRC had been created for: the Bay of Pigs Invasion. American intelligence officials and the members of the exile organization they were working with had expected the invasion to bring about a national uprising, or to at least allow the exile force to move into the countryside in order to carry out guerilla tactics against Cuba's revolutionary government with the aid of the local resistance. Having been forewarned of the invasion, however, Castro had made military preparations and in the weeks prior to the invasion had shattered the resistance's ability to organize any support by capturing several of its leaders.[8] The invasion force, comprised of 1400 exiles accompanied by three Catholic priests, found itself at a massive tactical disadvantage. By the end of the battle, 114 exiles had been killed, a few were executed shortly after falling into

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[6] Central Intelligence Agency, "Major Cuban Exile Organizations," attached to John McCone to Maxwell D. Taylor, May 3, 1962, Folder Cuba, Subject Exiles 1/62-10/62, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Boston, MA. (hereafter JFK Library).

[7] Central Intelligence Agency, "Counter Revolutionary Handbook," October 10, 1962, Folder Cuba, Subject Exiles 11/62-12/62, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.

[8] Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus*, 100.

the hands of the defensive force, and 1,189 were captured. Some 150 exiles were not able to land, were never deployed, or barely managed to retreat and make their way back.[9]

In the wake of the failed invasion, the federal government offered those members of Brigade 2506 who had not been captured the possibility of serving in the United States military. Meanwhile, the exile community actively sought to have the captured members of Brigade 2506 returned to the United States. The United States government refused to formally participate in the negotiations, but it did allow private citizens and the exiles to try to secure the release of those members of the invasion force who had not been executed or condemned for political crimes. Ultimately, all but seven of the soldiers who had been imprisoned in Cuba were returned to the United States in December of 1962. On December 29, President Kennedy addressed the members of the Brigade at the Miami Orange Bowl and after receiving the flag of Brigade 2506 he told the cheering crowd, "I can assure you that this flag will be returned to this brigade in a free Havana."[10]

Kennedy had plans for Brigade 2506. Prior to the rally at the Orange Bowl, the President had had a meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Palm Beach. The President was looking for a group that might become a "focal point" in Miami. The Joint Chiefs again brought up the issue of a government in exile, but the President was not ready to take that step. They all agreed that something needed to be done about the lack of direction among the exiles. "Right now," summarized an aid, "these various groups sit down there, stew in their own juice, elect committees, become emotionally upset, and then finally call upon somebody in Washington to let off their steam." Should a "focal point" be established, it could be used to direct and focus

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[9] *Ibid*, 95.
[10] García, *Havana USA*, 32-34.

the energies of these many groups.[11] The Kennedy administration had already attempted to establish a focal point in the Cuban Revolutionary Council. The Council had been meant to have been the basis of a new government following a successful invasion. It continued to exist in the wake of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, when the White House designated the CRC its point of contact related to any refugee issues.[12] In October of 1961, the U.S. government tried to solidify the power of the CRC over other Cuban exile organizations by having the aid provided to those organizations flow through the Council.[13]

This central position allowed Miró Cardona to serve as a spokesperson of the Cuban exile cause. He served in this role, for example, when he testified before the House Committee on the Judiciary in December of 1961. As part of his prepared statement he outlined exactly what he saw as the mentality of the Cuban refugee population. Every exile man, woman, and child, had "but one wish, one idea, one obsession—to go back to his country as soon as possible." Miró Cardona reinforced both the desire of the exiles to return to Cuba and the intent for a brief stay in the United States. The Cubans, he stated, "would rather fight and die than try to remake their lives in a friendly but foreign country."[14] By March of the following year, Miró Cardona and Antonio de Varona asked McGeorge Bundy to give the CRC "the wherewithal to invade Cuba and overthrow the Castro regime." Bundy replied that should the

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[11] C.V. Clifton to McGeorge Bundy, December 29, 1962, Folder Cuba, Subject Exiles: Brigade 2506 7/62—4/63, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.
[12] Richard N. Goodwin to John F. Kennedy, May 17, 1961, Folder Cuba, Subject Miro Cardona Material Sent to Palm Beach, Box 45A, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.
[13] "Text of U.S. Policy Statement read to Dr. Miro by Mr. Hurwitch," October 31, 1961, Folder Cuba, Subject Miro Cardona Material Sent to Palm Beach, Box 45A, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.
[14] Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Report of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate Made by its Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees Pursuant to S. Res. 50, Eighty-Seventh Congress First Session as Extended*, 87th Cong, 1st sess., 1962, S. Rep. 1328, 6.

United States support any military action against Castro's Cuba, such action had to be both decisive and complete. In view of the military state of Cuba, Bundy informed the CRC leaders, it did not appear that decisive action could be accomplished without the open military involvement of U.S. armed forces. The United States did not believe that open war against Cuba was advisable at that time. Miró Cardona told Bundy that the CRC needed to be permitted to carry out covert operations against Cuba or it would need to disband.[15] Frustrations only mounted as the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962 did not bring about the removal of Fidel Castro from power in Cuba.

By late 1962, Miró Cardona and the Cuban Revolutionary Council were in a particularly difficult position. They were the official point of contact for the United States government, but they were not allowed to carry out the type of operations that they believed would result in a victory over Castro's government. While Kennedy was planning to use Brigade 2506 as a new focal point for exile activities, Miró Cardona was attempting to ally himself with this group as well. Those attempts backfired when, on January 3, 1963, the members of the Brigade received $250 bonus payments for their service. The combatants were not against the bonus payment, but rather against receiving it publicly from Miró Cardona. A Central Intelligence Agency report indicated that the members "were enraged by the humiliating publicity and pictures appearing in the press and on television of them lined up to receive cash from 'Miro, Benefactor of the Brigade.'" Brigade members were furious over being used for Miró Cardona's political gain and

[15] "Cuba," March 29, 1962, Folder Cuba, Subject Miro Cardona Material Sent to Palm Beach, Box 45A, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.

they held that the publicity was ultimately harmful both for the United States and for the Brigade because it followed the Castro propaganda line of the Brigade being mercenaries.[16]

The CRC's head was unable to recast himself as the exile community's leader. Miró Cardona, in fact, became an object of ridicule and scorn among many in the exile community. As one refugee wrote of him, "we felt Miro Cardona was the instrument of U.S. policy among exiles."[17] Miró Cardona remained mostly silent about his own discontent with the federal government, only expressing his displeasure when the United States refused to allow exiles to conduct raids against Castro's Cuba.[18] This changed on April 18, 1963, when Miró Cardona resigned from his post at the Cuban Revolutionary Council and ended his silence on matters of U.S. foreign policy, becoming more and more vocal about what he saw as American failures. By the end of his life in the early 1970s, Miró Cardona put it quite simply, "one American, Teddy Roosevelt, helped Cuba's Independence; another, John F. Kennedy handed her to Russia."[19]

In deciding how to respond to Miro's accusations, one voice in the Kennedy administration urged the president to use restraint instead of castigating the CRC's former leader. Miró Cardona had not told the press everything he knew and antagonizing him might lead him to present a "hopelessly squalid picture of our covert dealings with the exiles," advised Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Miró Cardona's problem was that he saw only Cuba, while the United States had to consider the whole world, Schlesinger explained to the President. "Miro Cardona is basically a high-minded and decent man," wrote the Special Assistant to the President, "who

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[16] Central Intelligence Agency, "Feelings of the Cuban Brigade Against Jose Miro Cardona, Head of the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC)," January 5, 1963, Folder Cuba, Subjects Exiles: Brigade 2506 7/62-4/63, Box 48, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.
[17] Natasha Mella, letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, April 19, 1963.
[18] "Miro Irked at Policy, May Resign," *Miami Herald*, April 9, 1963.
[19] José Miró Cardona to "Martha and Bebo," June 24, 1971, Folder 9, Box 30, José Miró Cardona Papers, CHC.

has behaved fairly well for two years, who has been sorely tried and under great pressure, and who is still, I believe genuinely doing what he thinks best for his country."[20] Ultimately, the State Department responded to Miró Cardona's statement by calling it "a gross distortion of recent history."[21]

With Miró Cardona gone, the Cuban Revolutionary Council soon disbanded. Cuban exile politics were completely bereft of a "focal point" through which the United States could deal with refugee issues. Miró Cardona's resignation also stoked the anger of many in the Cuban community towards the United States government for not giving the refugees the full military and intelligence support to which they believed they were entitled. The *Miami Herald*'s editorial board took offense to the fact that the refugees appeared to feel entitled to determine American foreign policy. "Our foreign policy is our own to control," declared the *Herald*, "it is not subject to changes determined by how loudly a troublesome ally shouts his own contrary policy."[22] The *Herald's* editorial board wanted it to be very clear to the exiles that they were the tail, not the dog.

The disappearance of the Cuban Revolutionary Council left a vacuum that others sought to fill. In early 1964, five candidates were presented as a group that would represent exiles in the United States and abroad and to continue to work for the liberation of Cuba. A referendum was held and voted on by Cuban exiles in multiple countries. José M. Bosch, Chairman of the Board of the Bacardi Corporation, had financed all the preparations for the referendum and was attempting to ensure a positive response of over 25,000 for the referendum, despite a reaction

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[20] Arthur Schlesinger Jr. to John F. Kennedy, April 13, 1963, Folder Cuba, Subject Miro Cardona Material Sent to Palm Beach, Box 45A, National Security Files, Presidential Papers, Papers of John F Kennedy, JFK Library.
[21] Quoted in "We Make Our Policy, Amigos," editorial, *Miami Herald*, April 17, 1963.
[22] "We Make Our Policy, Amigos," editorial, *Miami Herald*, April 17, 1963.

among Miami's exiles that was described as "indifferent and skeptical." The organization created by this referendum, RECE (Cuban Representation in Exile), did not have a major impact. While RECE carried out covert operations and attempted to advance the cause of a post-Castro Cuba, its most notable feature was the participation of a 24 year old member of Brigade 2506 named Jorge Mas Canosa. Mas Canosa would go on to accrue significant political influence and wealth, but in 1964 he was described by the State Department as "politically ambitious, good speaker… courageous, impetuous, considered a troublemaker by MDC colleagues some years ago, but may have matured since then." [23]

By the time RECE entered the scene, there was a new president in the White House and the federal government was no longer actively seeking a "focal point" for exile activities. In a 1965 memo on whether to RECE, Gordon Chase, assistant to McGeorge Bundy, wrote that he did not think "that the Cuban exiles have much to offer the U.S. by way of significantly helping us to solve our Cuban problem." To start a program of support for RECE would cost the United States money and time and might "cause us a Pandora's Box-full of typical exile problems."[24] Chase's statements are representative of the "buyer's remorse" experienced by several national security officials who found that their investment in the Cuban exile community had not paid off. They had also found that their conception of a docile, easily controllable exile population that would fall in line with American foreign policy needs was less than accurate.

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[23] Office of Coordinator of Cuban Affairs, Miami to Department of State, April 13, 1964, Folder - Cuba Exile Activities, Volume 1 11/63-7/65 [2 of 2=3], Box 22, Country File, National Security File, President 1963-1969, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX (hereafter LBJ Library).

[24] Gordon Chase to John Crimmins, February 18, 1965, Folder - Cuba Exile Activities, Volume 2 1964-1965 [2 of 2], Box 22, Country File, National Security File, President 1963-1969, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, LBJ Library.

By the mid-1960s, the United States was entirely committed to aiding the refugees despite the negative experiences of members of the executive branch in dealing with the various Cuban exile organizations. One issue that drew particular attention in Congress was the issue of status normalization for the Cuban refugees. As parolees, the Cubans remained in a sort of legal limbo. If a refugee wanted to change status from parolee to permanent resident of the United States, they were forced to leave the United States and to apply for an immigrant visa at an American consular office.[25] Normalization was intended to allow refugees to apply for permanent residency without having to leave the borders of the United States. In the midst of the legislative conflicts surrounding the passing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the Johnson White House had come out in favor of status normalization for the Cubans, but had not pressed the issue.[26]

In October of that year, President Lyndon Johnson received a letter from New York Congressman William F. Ryan. Ryan had introduced legislation aimed at allowing status adjustment by the Cuban refugees in the United States. Ryan's discussions with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare revealed to him that the lack of permanent resident status was one of the most difficult problems that Cubans faced in the United States and that status adjustment would lighten the welfare rolls of many of these refugees. "If we are going to admit them, then we should admit them with as much help as possible," he explained to the President. "We must not admit them, then hold them at arm's length from many of the privileges of living

[25] Wilfred H. Rommel to Lyndon Baines Johnson, October 29, 1966, Folder P.L. 89-732 11/2/66 HR 15183, Box 45, Enrolled Legislation, President, 1963-1969, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, LBJ Library.
[26] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees during the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 127.

in our society."[27] The Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966 solidified the access of Cubans in the United States to the very privileges alluded to by Congressman Ryan.

The Cuban Adjustment Act allowed Cubans who had entered the United States after January 1, 1959 to apply for permanent resident status and set them on a path to citizenship. Instead of having to wait an additional five years after attaining permanent resident status in order to apply for citizenship, the Cuban refugees were allowed to count up to thirty months of the time they had spent in the United States toward satisfying the five year residency requirement. This cut the wait time between a successful adjustment to permanent residence and the ability to apply for citizenship, allowing for refugees to become citizens in two and a half years.[28] Permanent residency and a path to citizenship would be crucial for the development of the Cuban community in Miami. Not only did the community secure the economic gains made in the 1960s, but the Adjustment Act provided access to new forms of political power that were not dependent on exile organizations having the patronage of a presidential administration. This new, more permanent power helped the Cubans further transgress the established social order. It is no wonder, then, that the legislation was strongly opposed by leaders in South Florida's black community, a group that felt it had been negatively affected by the advantages that were given to the Cuban refugees now living in their area.[29]

In the early evening hours of Wednesday, August 7, 1968 a group of 300 frustrated African American youths and adults gathered at the intersection of NW 62$^{ND}$ Street and 17$^{th}$

[27] William F. Ryan to Lyndon Baines Johnson, October 12, 1965, Folder LE-IM 9/21/65—12/2/65, Box 74, Legislation, White House Central Files, President, 1963-1969, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, LBJ Library.
[28] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 129.
[29] *Ibid*, 128.

Avenue, in the predominantly black area known as Liberty City. Several meetings and rallies had been held in the preceding days in reaction to the Republican National Convention being held in Miami Beach. Liberty City was the crowded home to some 45,000 African Americans, many of whom had been forced into the area by urban renewal schemes. The crowd had already begun to throw stones and pebbles at passing cars when a white man driving an automobile with a "Wallace for President" bumper sticker approached the intersection. The driver soon found himself in the middle of a rain of rocks. He panicked and attempted to flee, driving around two other cars, speeding through a red light, hitting a truck, and ultimately seeing his vehicle stall. The driver waited for police intervention as his car was pelted with rocks and bottles amidst cries of "Get Whitey," but when no authorities arrived he fled his car and was pulled to the safety of a nearby bar by a group of African American spectators. Teens from the crowd then proceeded to overturn the man's vehicle and set it ablaze. This began two days of rioting that were ultimately ended through the intervention of Miami City Police, the Dade County Public Safety Department, and members of the Florida National Guard.[30]

The Liberty City Riot was a minor event when compared to the other urban disturbances that occurred that same year, but it still warranted investigation by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. The NCCPV had been established by President Lyndon Johnson in the aftermath of the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy in 1968 and it investigated several of the major civil disturbances of the late 1960s. The commission's investigators concluded that rioters had been driven by many of the same causes that had set off other riots across the country: chronic unemployment, poor access to public

[30] "Report of the Miami Task Force on Civil Disturbances in Miami, Florida during the week of August 5, 1968," Salmon Folder, Box 1, Series 60, Task Force VIII, Records of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, Austin, TX. (Hereafter LBJ Library.)

services, and bad relations with city police. The task force's report did note several characteristics that were unique to the disturbance in Liberty City; the most unique was the widespread feeling among African Americans that jobs in the city were being kept from them and being awarded to the Cuban refugee population.[31] The issue of refugees and jobs had a significant effect on racial politics in Miami. Many African Americans blamed whites for their systematic exclusion from first class citizenship, and they feared Cuban competition for the jobs they might be allowed to have in the city's tourism industry. When he lived in the city, Muhammad Ali was reported to have remarked that in Miami the division between heaven and hell was the railroad tracks.[32] On one side of the tracks were the crowded, impoverished African American communities, on the other were the playgrounds of affluent whites and tourists. When interviewed by the commission, long time Miami disk jockey and respected member of the African American community, Milton "Butterball" Smith, suggested that the Cubans made this division even starker. "So the argument is that not even is the white man going to let us live in Heaven, over there," Smith stated, "they won't even let us work over there—they give the jobs to Cubans. They don't even live in this country… they can't even vote here…"[33]

That African Americans would feel excluded of the economic privileges associated with living in a Sunbelt city was not uncommon in the late 1960s, but the inclusion of the Cubans in Miami complicates established understandings of race relations and economics in the area. While the flow of federal funds related to the Cold War and the national security state served to fundamentally alter the economy of the Sunbelt, it generally did not challenge ingrained power

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[31] "Report of the Miami Task Force on Civil Disturbances in Miami, Florida during the week of August 5, 1968."
[32] Milton D. Smith, "Interview with Milton D. Smith [Butterball]," Folder—Transcripts of Interviews Conducted Part II, Box 2, Series 60, Task Force VIII, Records of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, Papers of Lyndon Baines Johnson, LBJ Library.
[33] Milton D. Smith, "Interview with Milton D. Smith [Butterball]."

structures established along lines of race and class.[34] The influx of federal funds aimed at helping the Cuban refugees, however, served to fundamentally alter power relations in the city of Miami. Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s the Cuban community was able to carve a space for itself that challenged preconceived notions of power in a southern city. The Cuban challenge to the racial order, aided by the unprecedented access to welfare state structures of privilege this group had received, drew anger and confusion both from whites and from African Americans in Miami. The reactions of both of these groups shaped politics in the city and the Cuban responses to their fellow Miamians.

Much of the conflict had its roots in how African Americans received the news of the Cuban refugee influx and of the federal assistance the exiles received. Miami's African American press was receptive to the idea of providing shelter for Cuban exiles, but it also welcomed the idea of resettling as many refugees as possible from Dade County in an effort to ease unemployment in the area.[35] By late 1961, the *Miami Times*, the city's African American weekly, reported on complaints that Cubans were being given preference for jobs. In some cases black workers were being replaced by refugees. "While we sympathize with the unfortunate Cubans we feel that charity should begin at home," the newspaper's editorial read, "or in other words, American citizens should at least stand an equal chance of getting employment."[36] The *Times* questioned the logic of providing such levels of aid to a foreign group while American citizens

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[34] Bruce Schulman has written on a set of policies that put "place" over "people" in the development of the Sunbelt. These policies diverted federal funds to enrich impoverished areas without aiming to uplift the poor in those areas. As a result, the benefits of this economic transformation were reaped almost exclusively by white middle and upper class Americans, while African Americans and poor whites were neither empowered nor de-stigmatized for their poverty. See Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[35] "Cuban Refugees," editorial, *Miami Times*, December 17, 1960.

[36] "Refugee Problem," editorial, *Miami Times*, November 11, 1961.

were suffering from high unemployment numbers and a lack of access to welfare programs that would aid them in that situation. This narrative arose multiple times in the newspaper's editorial page, particularly after each increase in refugee presence. After a new wave of exiles started to appear in Miami in 1965 the *Times* once again suggested that while it was "an act of Christianity to help those in need," the burden of this act fell on the taxpayers and it was hard paying taxes without employment.[37]

From the start, the *Times* followed the Cuban situation with interest. The newspaper was particularly concerned with the development of the federal policies regarding the exiles with whom they now shared a city. At the end of the Cuban Refugee Program's first year, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees held a series of hearings on the problems caused by the influx of the Cuban refugees. When the *Times* reported on the hearings, it focused on the testimony and requests of certain witnesses. Representative Dante Fascell advocated for a system of work camps for jobless Cuban refugees. Mayor Robert King High called for an emergency meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors aimed at speeding up resettlement. Dade County Commissioner Arthur Patten proposed a screening program to ensure the refugees were fleeing for political and not economic reasons. Finally, Bishop Coleman Carroll appealed for an increased structure of relief payments for resettled refugees.[38] In short, the *Times* was particularly interested in those witnesses who came before the Subcommittee and advocated for faster removal of Miami's Cuban exile population or for measures that would decrease the number of refugees even allowed to enter the United States. It was telling that this was the focus of the *Times's* coverage, but perhaps doubly so because all four of these men testified on the same day as Dr.

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[37] "Cuban Refugees," editorial, *Miami Times*, November 26, 1965.
[38] "Hearings in Washington," *Miami Times*, December 9, 1961.

Miró Cardona. The Cuban Revolutionary Council Chairman had the first time slot on the first day of the hearings and was received with much interest by the member of the Subcommittee. Those reading only the *Miami Times* would have been hard pressed to find a single reference to Miró Cardona, the CRC, or his testimony in the article.

The *Times* article also failed to mention the testimony of *Miami Herald* reporter Juanita Greene, who directly addressed African American discontent with the federal government's policies regarding the refugees. "Resentment in Miami appears highest among our Negro population," Greene wrote in a statement submitted to the Subcommittee.[39] Greene related to the Senators the discontent of many of Miami's African Americans who saw children of Afro Cuban descent attending public schools from which their own children were barred. She also told the story of an African American minister who suggested that the only thing that black parents might do in the face of this compounded inequality would be to teach their children to speak only Spanish. Greene referred to those leaders in the African American community who were trying to gain equal opportunities for their community in a southern city, indicating that many of them were outspoken "about the fact that here, in the name of freedom and democracy is a group of foreigners that is given not only more assistance but more dignity than their own American group."[40] Greene reported on the problems of the African American community and advocated for proper attention to those problems in her testimony, just as she had the year before when she had informed her city and the country about the destitution of the Cuban refugees.

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[39] Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Report of the Committee on the Judiciary United States Senate Made by its Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees Pursuant to S. Res. 50, Eighty-Seventh Congress First Session as Extended*, 87th Cong, 1st sess., 1962, S. Rep. 1328, 73.

[40] Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Cuban Refugee Problems: Hearings before the Subcommittee to Investigate Problems Connected with Refugees and Escapees*, 77.

While Greene had the ear of the Senate Subcommittee by virtue of her profession and her whiteness, Miami's African Americans were perfectly comfortable advocating for themselves. There were many voices in the black community who decried this inequity in the years before the Liberty City riot. Attorney Donald Wheeler Jones, president of the local NAACP, wrote a letter addressed to several public officials including President Lyndon Johnson, Congressman Dante Fascell, and Governor Haydon Burns stating that the federal government had a responsibility toward the economically oppressed of South Florida, as well as toward the politically oppressed of Cuba. Jones stated that each African American who had lost a job to a Cuban had "borne his burden in silence as a sacrificial lamb for the extension of freedom and democracy to refugees from another land."[41] For Jones, as for many other African Americans in Miami, full access to the welfare state was a zero sum game in which they had been labeled the losers before they had even taken a turn.

The game was rigged not just in support of white Americans, but now also of the Cuban exiles. In time, this local grievance was taken up by African American leaders outside of the Miami area. Missouri Congressman William Clay of St. Louis requested that the Nixon Administration end the Freedom Flights, which had brought thousands of refugees into the United States over the previous five years. Clay argued that the true refugees had left Cuba many years before and those coming to the United States in recent waves were seeking economic opportunities. Many of those arriving were also among "the aged, the blind, the invalids and the unemployables." To spend $300,000,000 over the previous six years in "direct subsidization of the welfare program of an alien nation" was simply "madness."[42] Clay's call for an end to the airlift, however, struck a chord with more than just Miami's African American

[41] Quoted in "Negroes Face Loss of Jobs to Cubans," *Miami Times*, October 22, 1965.
[42] Quoted in "How Many More Cuban Refugees," editorial, *Miami Times*, May 29, 1970.

community. It also drew praise from other locals, including prominent ones who sat on the editorial board of the *Miami Herald*. The *Herald* criticized local politicians and praised Congressman Clay, who had "assumed leadership from away out yonder in Missouri on a touch political issue here in Florida. And those keeping hands off might one day find it difficult to explain to the folks here at home."[43]

Despite the growing feeling among several sectors in Miami that the airlift simply needed to be stopped, its agenda forgotten, many African Americans maintained—indeed, intensified—their criticism of the program and highlighted it as evidence of Washington's subtler but ultimately more scarring discriminatory practices against black citizens. The same year that Representative Clay asked for an end to the exile airlift, *Times* writer Ricky Thomas started an installment of his column, "Out of the Dark," by stating what many in Miami's African American community firmly believed, "being a Cuban ain't bad." For a people who some twelve years before were living under Batista's dictatorship, the Cubans were "reaping great financial gains and services in this Democratic Country were we have lived for hundreds and hundreds of years and have yet to see the Federal Government put this kind of money into our areas." Thomas questioned the fairness of providing such largesse to new immigrants while his people, burdened with centuries of oppression were denied any sort of program to overcome the circumstances created by that oppression. He suggested that a Cuban could get one hundred dollars or sometimes more with only one condition set upon him: that of need. "How many black families do you know," he asked, "that have the condition called NEED, but still have to go through rigid restrictions and requirements to get their monthly checks." Thomas's column took on the fundamental differences in access to multiple benefits between African Americans and

[43] "Rep. Clay's Clear View: Stop the Cuban Airlift," editorial, *Miami Herald*, May 22, 1970.

Cubans and recoiled at the imbalance. He asked why the federal government could not create such a program for African Americans and poor whites. This was particularly frustrating for the city's black population because the Cubans had been, under Batista, "as prejudiced, clannish, and had imbedded in them as much hatred towards the poor as any Mississippi Whites."[44]

Many Cubans did not help the attitudes of African Americans towards them with the statements they made regarding race relations in Cuba and in the United States. In 1969, journalist and racial progressive John Egerton visited South Florida to draft a report on race relations in the city after years of Cuban migration, and in the aftermath of the Liberty City Riot. Over several days, he collected data on the very complex racial landscape of the city of Miami. He found that Cubans and African Americans were not at each other's throats, concluding that the resentment over the loss of jobs was more directed towards white decisions makers, and that the exiles thought themselves more racially progressive than white Americans.

Egerton also observed that Afro Cubans were well integrated into the larger Cuban communities in the area. One Cuban he spoke to claimed that "There was no racial discrimination in Cuba. Class discrimination, yes, but not race." While Egerton met with scholars who suggested that racial and class discrimination were intrinsically linked in pre-revolutionary Cuba, most of the Cubans he met acknowledged no part in the repression of African Americans. Sometimes, those he interviewed were keenly aware of the structures that created racial discrimination, as when one group of Cubans suggested that it was white Americans who created ghettoes. "They are free to move when and where they choose, but Negroes are not," they told him, "Cubans don't feel any animosity toward Negro Americans, like the white Americans do." These Cubans were able to identify racial exclusion, so long as they

[44] Ricky Thomas, "Out of the Dark," *Miami Times*, April 17, 1970.

were not associated with it. The same group could then turn around and tell Egerton that the Civil Rights Movement was a communist ploy. Castro, they said, was pitting African Americans against whites and Cubans, planning and inspiring black unrest. "We have seen this protest against authority before," one Cuban told Egerton, "it is how our trouble started. It should not be allowed to happen here."[45] This conflation of the increasing radicalism of the Civil Rights Movement with communism was not rare in Egerton's interviews, nor was it a recent phenomenon among Cubans. These types of assertions by refugees from a communist state had had long been used by American conservatives as confirmations of their fears of the movement.[46]

There was an essential disconnection in the way in which Cuban exiles and African Americans saw one another and the role of the federal government in their lives. The exiles welcomed the aid they had been given, but they believed that their success in the Miami area had little to do with these privileges and everything to do with their own actions. African Americans were able to correctly identify the structures of privilege that had been provided for the refugees and how they were parallel to those which had been denied their community as the welfare state began to crumble, but they were not privy to the information that would allow them to verify what they had long suspected: that their wellbeing had no tactical value for American foreign policy goals. Still, they saw access to privilege and asked why they themselves, as citizens, were being denied what was being given to migrants. At the end of his column, Ricky

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[45] John Egerton, "Cubans in Miami: A Third Dimension in Racial and Cultural Relations," November 1969, Folder 111, Box 39, Series IV, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[46] One example of how established and widespread this talking point had become was published five years before when the newsletter of Americans for Conservative Action, published in Indianapolis, Indiana indicated that anti-Castro Cubans had been warning for "quite some time" that Cuban communists were stimulating terrorism in the Civil Rights struggle. See Edward R. Scheme, "They Were Right Before," ACA Newsletter 2, no. 4 (September 8, 1964).

Thomas quoted the promise in the preamble to the Constitution to ensure the general welfare of the American people. He found, in the phrasing of that document, the justification for such privilege to be made available to poor black and white Americans as well as to the Cubans. "Being an American, not a refugee," he wrote, "no greater case can I state."[47]

African Americans were not the only ones to claim that Cubans were not, in fact, American citizens and that they were overly privileged in relation to their status in the United States. Officials in the same local and state government organizations that had so actively sought federal aid for the Cubans and which administered the federal funds earmarked for the exiles also expressed their dissatisfaction. In late 1967, an article in "The Cuban Beat," a recurring feature in the *Miami Herald's* local section, featured a complaint from Dr. Bernardo Benes, a Cuban exile director of the Welfare Planning Council of Dade County and a vice president of Washington Federal Savings and Loan Association, that Cuban refugees were treated as "second class citizens" in regards to the services they received from local and state government agencies in seeking jobs. Upon reading this, Harry L. Tyson, the Metropolitan Area Manager for the Florida State Employment Service, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Herald* seeking to clear up what he saw as a fundamental misconception on Benes's part. "The Cuban refugees are not second class citizens," Tyson stated, "they are in fact, not citizens at all, but refugees on parole." Tyson pointed out that the operations of his agency were not paid for by the taxes collected from working refugees, but rather by an excise tax imposed upon employers by the federal government. He went on to state that it was the responsibility of his agency to seek out jobs for citizens first and for refugees second. "There are jobs going begging all over the country which the refugee could fill if he was willing to relocate," Tyson suggested before he

[47] Ricky Thomas, "Out of the Dark," *Miami Times*, April 17, 1970.

finally asked the *Herald* editor and his readers how much more of the refugee population Miami could absorb in the current labor market.[48] While there was significant statistical evidence suggesting that the refugees were not a consistent drain on Miami's economy or labor market, this perception persisted even in the minds of local officials.

Like African Americans and local and state officials, many white Miamians complained about the Cubans almost from the moment of their arrival in the United States. Most Miamians were quick to point out that the Cubans were allies in a larger struggle and that their exile was tragic, but this did not mean that they appreciated the Cuban presence in their city. In July of 1961, for example, Congressman Dante Fascell received a letter from a constituent who was irate about the effects of the Cuban migration. Mrs. Alyeene S. Brown informed Fascell that she had known him for twenty years and that she had worked for him during his first election in Dade County. She was infuriated by the fact that American jobs were being taken by Cubans who worked for lower wages. She was also angry at how the Cubans had entirely taken over certain areas, recounting how some native Miamians were forced to leave a local beach by "dirty Black Cubans" who had hotel staff terrorized and controlled. The influx of Cubans had also resulted in "social disease" running rampant. This was not the Miami she desired, and she wondered how long it would be before they destroyed her nation.[49]

Fascell's staff did not think much of Brown's letter. They openly mocked it in the summary that they presented to the Congressman. A staffer facetiously warned that Congressman that if he did not personally put on a hood and ride with the Klu Klux Klan, he

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[48] Harry L. Tyson, letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, December 12, 1967.
[49] Alyeene S. Brown to Dante Fascell, July 5, 1961, Topical Files—Anti-Cuban Sentiment—Miami, 1961-1962, Box 1924, Dante B. Fascell Congressional Papers, 1955-1993, University of Miami Special Collections, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL (Hereafter cited as DBF Papers).

would soon not be able to run for dogcatcher in Dade County. Brown's racist attitudes were clearly considered ridiculous the staffer reporting on the letter, who concluded by writing: "remember, if you're going to write, it's much better to be irate: if you want to rate, be irate."[50] The problem for Fascell and his staff was that it was not only overtly racist individuals like Brown who wrote to voice frustration with Cuban migrants. In August of 1962, the Congressman's office received a letter from an attorney named Effie Knowles who informed Fascell that "too many Cuban refugees" lived next door to the home she had owned for 38 years. Knowles claimed one of her neighbors had phoned her home early one morning and threatened to break every bone in her body and that the Cubans called their neighbors "dirty Americans." Knowles was outraged because the Cubans got "free money, free food, free clothing out of our tax money." "If they can not behave," she asked, "why should they get our money, our food, our clothing? Do we vainly imagine they are all anti-Castro?"[51] Knowles called into question the veracity of the refugee claim to political asylum, suggesting, as many others did, that many of the exiles were in fact coming to the United States for better economic opportunities. If the Cubans wanted to come to the United States and be entered in the public welfare rolls, could they not at least behave?

Fascell and his staff forwarded the complaint on to the Cuban Refugee Program and received a response from Staff Adviser A. A. Micocci. Micocci reminded Fascell that the type of behavior described by Knowles was "very much out of line with the generally fine behavior of

[50] Staff summary of Ayleen S. Brown's letter to Dante Fascell, Topical Files—Anti-Cuban Sentiment—Miami, 1961-1962, Box 1924, DBF Papers.
[51] Effie Knowles to Dante Fascell, August 22, 1962, Topical Files—Anti-Cuban Sentiment—Miami, 1961-1962, Box 1924, DBF Papers.

the Cuban refugees in Miami and elsewhere."[52] Micocci also reached out to Knowles and presumably suggested she take her neighbors to court. After this communication, Knowles once more wrote Fascell, letting him know that she was "rather fed up on the attitude of these Cubans on big salaries and the bureaucrats on big salaries—that decent, respectable, law abiding American citizens, LADIES, should stoop to go to Police Court with Cuban prostitutes and procureers[sic] who have invade our good neighborhoods." The language Knowles used clearly reflected that used by other white Americans when faced with racial and class transgressions in what had been previously homogenous communities. Instead of impugning the refugees for their race as Brown did in her letter, Knowles differentiated herself from the Cuban "invaders" not only by her nationality, but by her class and her distance from their perceived criminality. She went so far as to use a property rights argument against the Cuban presence in her neighborhood by stating she did not know "why my peace and property values should be disturbed by the scum of Cuba." [53]

Knowles's rage against her Cuban neighbors not only stemmed from the conflicts she was having with them and their racial and class transgression of the social order, but also from another transgression: she believed that her government was far more interested in the wellbeing of the Cubans than they were in her own. The government was not on the side of the white lawyer, but rather on that of the Cuban refugees. "The trouble with the Cuban Refugees," Knowles explained to Fascell, "is they know that they are backed in whatever they do." It was not only the government that was backing the exiles. She saw "our Churches are all tearing their shirts giving them MORE." The social institutions established to defend her racial and class

[52]A. A. Micocci to Dante Fascell, September 24, 1962, Topical Files—Anti-Cuban Sentiment—Miami, 1961-1962, Box 1924, DBF Papers.
[53] Effie Knowles to Dante Fascell, October 3, 1962, Topical Files—Anti-Cuban Sentiment—Miami, 1961-1962, Box 1924, DBF Papers.

interest were failing Knowles. They were, instead, supporting the refugees. The national security argument provided little comfort for Knowles as she believed officials were being duped. She sought desperately to open the Congressman's eyes by asking him if "any of you realize that Castro is letting out his friends too?" Clearly the Cubans had infiltrated the government through their work for the Cuban Refugee Program and she told Fascell that the federal government needed more Americans on its staff in Miami. She concluded by telling him that she did not want her second letter sent to Micocci and that all Fascell needed to do to see ill-behaved Cubans was to take a walk on Flagler Street.[54]

Knowles was not the last white Miamian to criticize the Cuban exiles and their effect on South Florida. In August of 1970, a woman named Violette McCrary attempted to call Fascell and complain about the continued Freedom Flights, her plummeting property values, and the recent increase in her property taxes.[55] Another constituent wrote that because of the Cubans, Miami's schools were overcrowded and the city was "no longer a place where retired Americans can migrate to and spend their latter days—nor do folks from the north who sued to come for the winter for vacation care to come down because the probability of finding a place to stay has diminished."[56] One woman put it even more bluntly, stating that Miami was "ruined already." "Our downtown is a pollution of street-walkers," wrote Mrs. Samuel J. Constance in a letter copied to a group of politicians including Dante Fascell and President Richard Nixon, "mostly brazen 50¢ whores who approach our teenagers male and female.. wallowing in their dope-wealth."[57] One man called into question Fascell's stance on not immediately ceasing the airlift

[54] Effie Knowles to Dante Fascell, October 3, 1962.
[55] Phone message discussed in Dante Fascell to Violette McCrary, August 13, 1970, Folder 14, Box 2052, DBF Papers.
[56] Getrude Beidler to Dante Fascell, July 20, 1970, Folder 14, Box 2052, DBF Papers.
[57] Mrs. Samuel J. Constance to Dante Fascell, July 25, 1970, Folder 15, Box 2052, DBF Papers.

from Cuba and promised not to vote for him again. "You are supposed to represent us," wrote Fred C. Oakley, "not Cubans."[58] The Cuban issue also created solidarity across race lines, as when William Purnell wrote Fascell to complain that "we ordinary, low-income, put-upon white and black American citizens have reached our point of disgust re government assistance ($112,000,000.00 package) going exclusively to the Cubans brought air express to Miami." Purnell wondered when it would ever end.[59]

Other citizens expressed equally negative but more muddled perspectives on the Cuban presence. George A. Troiani wrote Fascell to inform him that if a vote were taken among Miamians in July of 1970, they would "be inclined to favor any plan that would discontinue the Cuban airlift, furthermore they would like to see the Cubans who now reside in this area sent back to Cuba; or to some other part of the country." Troiani recounted the claims of exiles politician Manolo Reyes that the reason for the Cuban exodus was that the island had been converted into a Soviet military base. By that logic, Troiani asked, why should Miamians who had been born in the United states "have to put up with these people who do not speak our language, or do they care to learn, as did the emigrants who came from Europe." Miami had been turned into a Cuban camp, falling right in line with Fidel Castro's plans of eliminating any opposition and securing his hold on the country. Had the United States not allowed this exodus, the Cubans would long have resolved their problems. Troiani went on to list the hardships that the Cubans had caused in the area; from the damage done to Miami's black community to housing shortages to higher school taxes. "If they have benefited the area," he asked, questioning the suggestion that the Cuban presence was positive, "why are taxes going up?" Despite this laundry list of complaints, however, Troiani then asked Fascell to consider what

[58] Fred C. Oakley to Dante Fascell, July 7, 1970, Folder 14, Box 2052, DBF Papers.
[59] William Purnell to Dante Fascell, June 6, 1970, Folder 15, Box 2052, DBF Papers.

would happen if matters became favorable for a return to Cuba. An exodus of the Cubans and they great deal of money they spent in the area would cause a "condition not unlike a disaster area." He informed the Congressman that he felt like a stranger in his own country. He decried their presence, yet he also worried about the disaster that would result from losing the Cubans.[60]

Fascell and other members of his congressional delegation, like Senator Claude Pepper, received multiple letters from constituents railing against the continued stay of the Cuban refugees in the United States. They were not alone. By 1963 Miami's journalistic community had turned a critical eye on the Cubans, a fact made particularly clear by the opening song to a 90 minute show performed by the several journalist to a sold out crowd of 650 at an event aimed at raising money for journalism scholarships at the University of Miami. Sung to the tune of "South of the Border," the full cast began:

> South of the border,
> By way of Key West,
> They sneaked out of Cuba's isle, the rank and file
> To be our guests,
> Right here in Miami,
> Where everything's free
> And here's where they'll stay, bub,
> Till eternity.[61]

The scene then shifted to the Cuban Refugee Center, where the roasters portrayed Cubans waiting in line to pick up relief checks while they smoked expensive cigars and sported diamond stickpins. The refugees then took up their own song: "Oh, resettle us not on zee cold prairie/

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[60] George A. Troiani to Dante Fascell, July 28, 1970, Folder 15, Box 2052, DBF Papers.
[61] Lee Winfrey, "Cuban 'Invasion' of Miami, Politicos 'Roasted' in Annual Newsmen Face," *Miami Herald*, April 26, 1963.

Where zee men must work, and zee dough ain't free…"[62] This satire allowed the journalists to openly portray the Cubans as undeservedly privileged freeloaders, a far cry from the early articles that portrayed them as brave and tragic in the face of adversity. More drastic, in light of their part in the 1960 drive to obtain federal aid for the refugees, was when the *Miami Herald* published an editorial entitled "Cuban Airlift Simply U.S. Aid To Castro."[63] The *Herald* had been critical of exile attempts to control U.S. policy toward Cuba, but voices within the paper were growing increasingly concerned about the long term effects of the influx on Miami's economy and its politics. A decade had decidedly changed the perspective of Miami's press in regards to the refugees.

There were also voices in local and state government that were growing increasingly fed up throughout the 1960 and into the 1970s. Some had already suggested using the Opa Locka base as a self-sustaining Cuban community, but in March of 1963 former Governor LeRoy Collins went further and suggested the creation of a new nation of Cuban exiles. Collins, who had been part of the push for federal involvement in the refugee situation, was one of the most prominent proponents converting an uninhabited West Indies island into "a new Cuban homeland."[64] Many were quick to point out flaws with this plan. Officials in the Bahamas explained that the uninhabited islands were in this condition because they were uninhabitable.[65] The refugee community decried this idea as ridiculous, with one exile calling it an exercise in land development instead of nation building. In a piece written for the *Herald*, former *Prensa Libre* editor Humberto Medrano counselled Collins: "please do not confuse your plans of urban development with the birth of a nation, because a nation is not born by building on an empty

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[62] *Ibid*.
[63] "Cuban Airlift Simply U.S. Aid to Castro," editorial, *Miami Herald*, February 11, 1970.
[64] "Collins Suggests New Cuba," *Miami Herald*, March 10, 1963.
[65] *Ibid*.

lot."[66] While this idea did not make serious headway into policy circles, it remained popular among those Miamians who were opposed to a continued Cuban presence. One letter sent to Fascell and Nixon years later simply asked "WHY NOT CLEAN THIS PLACE OUT AND PUT THE MAJORITY OF THESE PEOPLE ON AN ISLAND OR TWO… AND LET THEM BUILD THEIR ECONOMY, BUILD THEIR WAR SUPPLIES, as Free China has done?"[67]

This is not to suggest that the Cuban community in Miami was without allies. While exile politics lacked unity and clout at the national and foreign policy levels, the growing economic clout of the Cuban community in Miami ensured the growth of their political clout at the local level. This made for overt intersections between local politics and the transnational politics of exile. This was the case when, in September of 1969, the City Commission of Miami passed Resolution No. 40983. This resolution condemned the treatment of political prisoners in the "foul, pestilence ridden jails of Communist Cuba," where these prisoners were incarcerated "solely because they are patriots who were engaged in a death struggle to keep the world from being enslaved by Communist Masters."[68] The resolution itself did not mention the exile community, but it is clear that the growing power of the Cubans was becoming a factor in the politics of Dade County.

While the Cuban Adjustment Act was only passed in 1966, it did establish a path to citizenship for the Cuban exiles; a path toward the establishment of a larger Cuban American community in the United States generally and in South Florida particularly. The terms of the Adjustment Act did not drive up the number of Cuban voters flocking to the polls immediately. A Cuban exile needed five years as a permanent resident in the United States before they could

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[66] Humberto Medrano, "'No, Mr. Collins, There Are No Instant Nations,'" *Miami Herald*, March 20, 1963.
[67] Mrs. Samuel J. Constance to Dante Fascell, July 25, 1970, Folder 15, Box 2052, DBF Papers.
[68] Commission of the City of Miami, Florida, *Resolution No. 40983*, p. 2, Folder 11, Box 2067, DBF Papers.

apply for citizenship, a step many Cubans were reluctant to take.[69] This was compounded by the fact that the Cubans applying for residency needed to fit within the western hemisphere quotas established by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Cubans were not yet a powerful voting bloc in South Florida in the late 1960s, but as early as August of 1967, they were mobilizing at a local level in an attempt to gain the influence with the legislative branch that they had failed to gain with the executive branch. In that month, Representative Claude Pepper introduced Concurrent Resolution 492 which aimed to prevent the Cuban government from pursuing its "hostile and disruptive course of action with impunity." The resolution called for the government of the United States to formulate and present a plan of action to the members of the Organization of American States for the elimination of the Castro regime in Cuba "by whatever means necessary." The U.S. government was to undertake this task with the cooperation of other governments or alone, if necessary.[70]

The resolution, committing the United States to an active, public plan to eliminate Castro's revolutionary government, did not pass, but it did spur the Cuban community in Miami into action. Congressman Pepper's friend, exile banker Bernardo Benes, held meetings with other prominent exiles seeking their endorsement and support of the resolution. He was able to immediately obtain the cooperation of RECE leader Ernesto Freye Varona and the financial support from Jose Bosch Lamarque of the Bacardi Company. Together with Luis Botifoll, Benes and Freye created The Sponsoring Committee in Support of Resolution 492 in September of 1967 after a private meal with Congressman Pepper to which nearly 60 prominent exiles were

[69] The widespread cultural concerns related to adopting American citizenship will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[70] Concurrent Resolution 492, HR 492, 90th Cong., 1st sess., (August 16, 1967), 2.

invited.[71] This organization mobilized its lobbying capability, inviting members of congress to a luncheon with Jorge Mas Canosa at the Capitol Hill Club less than ten days after the creation of the committee.[72] The Committee met several times until October 12, 1967 after which time there were no more meetings. Factional infighting had once again destroyed any semblance of a united front as U.S. government sources reported that Freye had attempted to dominate the committee and present it as an effort of RECE, most likely as an attempt to revive the dormant organization whose name Freye continued to use.[73]

By the election of 1968, Republicans in South Florida were attempting to use the clout of the Cuban community to change the electoral equation of the traditionally Democratic Dade County. A pamphlet entitled "¿Por que los Cubanos-Americanos Respaldan a Mike Thompson Para el Congreso?" ("Why do Cuban Americans Endorse Mike Thompson for Congress?) was circulated by the campaign of Dante Fascell's Republican opponent.[74] The pamphlet charged Fascell with pandering to Cuban voters after having taken as stand against the Cuban exiles when "certain anti-Cubans in Miami" had charged that Cubans were taking jobs away from African Americans. Fascell was also portrayed as an enemy to the cause of Cuban liberation because of statements he made in Congress, where he stated he did not believe an invasion from the outside would attain the desired objectives. Fascell, based on the previous experience of the Bay of Pigs invasion concluded that "an invasion might give Castro the opportunity he

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[71] The list of exiles invited included bankers, lawyers, doctors, media personalities, and political figures in the exile community. See "Personas invitadas a la comida privada con el Representante al Congreso de los Estados Unidos, Honorable Claude Pepper, el Domingo 17 de Septiembre, en Miami, Florida," Folder 22, Box 2063, DBF Papers.

[72] Dante Fascell declined this invitation issued by the Washington firm of Frank R. Lee & Associates. See Frank R. Lee to Dante Fascell, September 22, 1967, Folder 22, Box 2063, DBF Papers.

[73] "Cuban Exile Activities in Support of Draft Resolution 492, Introduced by Congressman Claude Pepper," undated—presumably late 1967, Folder 22, Box 2063, DBF Papers.

[74] Mike Thompson for Congress Committee, "¿Por que los Cubanos-Americanos Respaldan a Mike Thompson Para el Congreso?," 1968, Folder 25, Box 2063, DBF Papers.

needs to unite the restive and changing Cuban populace, since, no matter how insane Castro's policy may be, Cuban nationalism [patriotism] remains ardent." The pamphlet contrasted Fascell's statements with Mike Thompson's track record, describing him as a "genuine anti-Communist" and claiming the Republican candidate had charged Fidel Castro as a communist in his writings and speeches as a student leader at the University of Miami in 1959.[75]

Fascell won the election of 1968 due to a combination of factors: the county's long-standing Democratic allegiance, the relative weakness of the Cuban voting bloc in the late 1960s, and the fact that Fascell had allies within the Cuban community. Despite Thompson's depiction of Fascell as an enemy of Cuban freedom, the Congressman was a valuable ally to many Cuban organizations. In 1966, for example, the founder of the Truth About Cuba Committee, Luis V. Manrara, sent Fascell a letter describing the way how the Congressman and some of his colleagues kept "the torch of freedom for the countries enslaved by the international socialist/communist conspiracy" as heartwarming. Manrara held Fascell up as an example of the type of good man that would make a difference as he remained confident that, "sooner or later, your great country will awaken to the dire peril of socialism/communism and will destroy this most dangerous enemy of civilization."[76] It is not clear whether Manrara truly felt that Fascell was so stalwart and steady an ally of the Cuban exile cause or if he was simply maintaining a relationship with the existing power structure until a stronger ally in the fight against Castro could be found. It is clear, however, that many among the most fervently anti-Castro exiles did not see a direct challenge to Fascell as feasible in the 1960s.

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[75] Elizabeth Hanunian, trans., "Why Do the Cuban-Americans Endorse Mike Thompson for Congress?," September, 1968, Folder 25, Box 2063, DBF Papers.
[76] Luis V. Manrara to Dante Fascell, June 10, 1966, Folder 10, Box 2180, DBF Papers.

This did not mean that local politicians like Fascell were disinterested in courting the Cuban community in Miami. In the months leading up to the 1970 midterm election, Fascell and his campaign sought to bolster his standing among the Cuban community and his anti-Castro bona fides. On May 20 of that year, the Congressman made a statement on the floor of the House of Representatives regarding the 68th anniversary of Cuban independence and attacking Fidel Castro for making a mockery out of the very concept. "Castro's brand of 'independence' for Cuba," he declared, "has meant the substitution of one dictatorship for another, and the perpetuation of a drab and fearful life for 6 million Cubans."[77] Fascell and his staff then contracted a booth at the Fourth Annual Cuban and American Exposition Fair, held July 15th through the 19th in an attempt to reach out to this community. Billed as "30 Fairs in One," the show was meant to demonstrate the commercial, industrial, and artistic achievements of the "USA, Free Cuba, and Latin America."[78] Fascell's staff saw this as an opportunity to distribute material about the Congressman's work and he ultimately approved the use of 5,000 copies of his May 20 speech for distribution at his booth.[79]

The following year, Fascell was particularly interested in a report written by two political scientists on "The Projected Impact of Cuban Settlement on Voting Patterns in Metropolitan Miami, Florida."[80] Paul S. Salter and Robert C. Mings saw Dade County as offering a unique opportunity to political researchers to "examine a recent large in-migration of people, who, as

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[77] Reproduction of Dante Fascell, "The 68th Anniversary of Cuban Independence: 'Independence' in Fidel Castro's Cuba," May 20, 1970, Folder 10, Box 1833, DBF Papers.
[78] "4th Cuban and American Exposition Fair" flyer, Folder 10, Box 1833, DBF Papers.
[79] "COR" to Dante Fascell, "Re: Campaign '70—Cuban-American Exhibition and Fair," June 30, 1970, Folder 10, Box 1833, DBF Papers.
[80] In a letter to co-author Robert C. Mings, Fascell called the study "a noteworthy first step toward filling an obvious void in political intelligence," and found that their findings were "not only sound but also cause for concern." See Dante Fascell to Robert C. Mings, May 10, 1971, Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.

they become naturalized citizens, will accrue the voting power potential to alter existing political alignments and, perhaps, create a major restructuring of political power in Metropolitan Miami." They predicted that the ramifications of such a political shift could have "far-reaching consequences—affecting not only local and state, but possible national elections." Salter and Mings placed estimates of Miami's Cuban population in 1970 between 184,820 and 278,138, noting that unofficial testimony from the U.S. Census office in Miami had declared the latter figure quite conservative. For the purposes of their study, however, the researchers pointed to estimations that the number of Spanish speaking residents in Miami would reach 482,000 by 1975. This would make 29% of Dade County residents Spanish speaking, and 90% of that group Cuban.[81]

Salter and Mings identified three areas of high Cuban concentration in the greater Miami area: the Center City District, the Hialeah-Miami Springs District, and the Edison District of Northeast Miami. The researchers reported a strong Democratic leaning in all three districts based on data from the presidential elections between 1948 and 1964. In the election of 1968 there was a change in these districts, given that it was the first "real, if limited," opportunity for Cubans to vote in a presidential election. While the Democrats carried Miami with 48.4% of the vote, compared to 37% for the Republican Party and 14.6% for George Wallace's American Independent Party, these three areas saw the Republicans gain a slight majority over the Democrats, 40.1% to 39.9%. These localities also showed a stronger turnout for Wallace than the rest of the city at 20%. Salter and Mings noted that 70% of the Spanish speaking population in Miami were not citizens and had not applied for naturalization, and attributed this trend both to the five year residency requirement before naturalization is possible and the "wide spread

[81]Paul S. Salter and Robert C. Mings, "The Projected Impact of Cuban Settlement on Voting Patterns in Metropolitan Miami, Florida," Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.

hope among refugees that they are but temporary exiles in Miami awaiting the removal of Fidel Castro before returning to their homeland." They cited numerous studies that divided Cubans in Miami between a temporary "exile type" who fully expected a return to the island and what they considered to be a more realistic "immigrant type" who had begun to perceive South Florida as home.[82]

The research team sought to gage where the Cubans fell within the American political spectrum by conducting interview surveys with refugees at major street intersections in the Cuban districts during July of 1970. The survey requested opinions on political party preference and three societal issues facing the United States. The responses showed a strong preference for the Republican Party at 73%, compared to only 16% preference for the Democratic Party. The refugees were also asked to rank three topical issues by order of importance. Respondents chose "law and order" as the most significant problem of the day by 78%, with only 10% selecting "civil rights" and 6% choosing "pollution and the environment." Salter and Mings believed that classifying Cubans as prospective members of "right wing" politics was an overstatement; they observed that ample anti-radical statement was prevalent. They also explained that much of the distaste for the Democratic Party among the exiles came from its association with the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and that the "extremely unpopular handling of the bay of Pigs Invasion has created seemingly 'permanent' hostility'" towards the Party, comparing it to the distrust toward the Republican Party in the Deep South following Reconstruction.[83]

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[82] Salter and Mings, "The Projected Impact of Cuban Settlement on Voting Patterns in Metropolitan Miami, Florida," Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.
[83] *Ibid*.

The authors warned that it was conceivable that the Cuban vote could turn Miami from a traditional liberal stronghold to a source of conservative electoral strength. While they conceded that many factors would affect that pace of this transition and that predicting voter behavior without complete data could be hazardous, Salter and Mings made a prediction about the electoral patterns in Dade County starting in the mid-1970s. If Fidel Castro's regime did not fall by 1976, then the presidential candidate who, in that election, "champions conservative ideals and proclaims a militant anti-communist international policy should be able to speculate with some confidence that he will receive a large proportion of the Cuban vote and probably carry Miami, Florida in his victory column."[84] As the Cuban American community gained political influence it was possible that they could serve as the lynchpin of any presidential election. The price would be an embrace of a specific set of foreign policy objectives regarding Cuba.

Mings and Salter's predictions did not cause Democrats in Miami to simply give up on Dade County, but in the months before the 1972 presidential election it became clear that the Republican Party was far more organized in recruiting Cuban Americans. Fascell received a letter from Bernardo Benes in May of that year pointing out that between 1965 and 1970 Democratic registration in Dade County had dropped by 8,000 while Republican registration had increased by 20,000. Benes, a registered Democrat, credited the change to the close to 800 Cubans who were becoming American citizens each month and registering as members of the two major parties. "While the Republican Party has been active in seeking the support of the Cuban-American in Dade County," Benes wrote, "the Democratic Party doesn't show any sign of being alive." Benes blasted the "over simplistic" reasoning by Republicans that the Cubans were in Miami because of Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs Invasion, but he commended the fact

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[84] *Ibid*.

that the GOP had recruited a group of Cuban Republicans to raise money for Richard Nixon's re-election and they had already raised $800,000 toward that goal. Benes encouraged the Fascell to work with Dade's Democratic Leadership to develop the leadership of the Cuban Democrats in the county. He pointed out that he had never heard anyone from the Democratic Party challenge the Republican assertions regarding the Bay of Pigs, despite the fact that he believed the Democrats had traditionally been more responsive to the needs of minority groups in Dade County and that Latin America, including Cuba, was always better treated when the United States had a Democratic Administration. Benes did not have any simple solutions, but he encouraged Fascell to contact him or other Cuban American Democrats like Manuel Reboso and Alfredo Duran.[85]

Fascell was in complete agreement with Benes. He related to the banker that he also had urged the County and State Democratic Committees to engage in a campaign of active registration and outreach to the Cuban American community. "Unfortunately," Fascell confided in Benes, "neither the County nor State Committees were able to mount any significant continuing campaign." In an effort to ensure that there was some sort of effort going, Fascell undertook the effort of sending a letter to each person who became a citizen in Dade County giving them basic information and "at least letting them know that one Democrat was interested in them and anxious to maintain contact."[86] Other individuals in the Democratic Party, like Congressman Claude Pepper, had also engaged in this tactic.[87] As early as 1968,

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[85] Bernardo Benes to Dante Fascell, May 8, 1972, Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.
[86] Dante Facell to Bernardo Benes, May 18, 1972, Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.
[87] Pepper had form letters he sent to new single or married citizens indicating that as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives he would do whatever he could to further their welfare and that of every other citizen and encouraging him to contact him. Pepper had been requesting and receiving lists of new naturalized citizens in Dade County since at least 1966. See Folder 368, Box 43, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

Pepper had expressed awareness and concerns about the "determined effort the Republicans are making among Cuban-Americans in our area and throughout the country," and had declared that the Democratic Party needed to combat this effort.[88] As Fascell pointed out to Benes four years later, no concerted effort had materialized. While Pepper, Fascell, and others had made overtures independently, "this individual effort is no substitute for a well-organized, highly visible Democratic Party effort." The Congressman vowed to work with Benes and other Cuban American Democrats and to discuss the matter with Pepper, Senator Lawton Chiles, Governor Reubin Askew, and any other Florida Democrats who would listen.[89]

Others in the traditionally Democratic Dade County were also reaching out to Fascell and his fellow Party leaders and calling attention to the vast organizational superiority of Dade's Republicans in this area. Areas of traditional Democratic strength were showing the Republican advance. A Manager of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in Miami, Mayer Finkel, contacted Fascell about the issue of voter registration two months after Benes did. Given the large number of Cuban women working in Miami's growing garment industry, Finkel had significant contact with the Cuban American community. He informed Fascell that it had come to the Union's attention that when Spanish speakers in the Greater Miami area were sworn in as citizens of the United States there was a delegation of Spanish speakers from the Republican Party at the swearing in ceremony to "greet and congratulate these new citizens and to assist them to register to vote, and indoctrinate them to the views and aims of the Republican Party."[90] Finkel included a Spanish language leaflet distributed by the Republicans at naturalization ceremonies encouraging the new citizens to make their opinions heard on issues

[88] Claude Pepper to John M. Area, September 9, 1968, 369, Box 43, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[89] Dante Facell to Bernardo Benes, May 18, 1972, Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.
[90] Mayer Finkel to Dante Fascell, July 10, 1972, Folder 441, Box 1838, DBF Papers.

including taxes and busing. The leaflet explained that at the end of the ceremony the new citizens could register as members of the Republican Party at the tables located at the entrance of the precinct so as to avoid having to take another trip. "New citizen," the leaflet read, "the Republican Party congratulates you, and needs you!"[91]

While the Republican Party had a superior outreach program toward the Cuban American community this did not mean that the Cuban community in Miami was putting all its energy behind just one major political parties. In July 1972, while the Democratic National Convention was being held in Miami Beach, a group of 700 anti-communist Cubans marched in opposition of the Castro regime.[92] This demonstration was to coincide with an anti-war march and a march for gay rights, creating what the Herald described as a "potentially explosive mix."[93] Dade County's citizens and authorities were fearful that a repeat of the violence surrounding the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago might result from "a tangle between left-leaning kids and quick-blooded Latins." Authorities, however worked to avoid such confrontations by speaking both to Cuban leaders like Benes and former Cuban President Carlos Prío Socarrás, and with representatives of organizations like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and planning ahead to avoid any confrontation between the different groups of protestors.[94] This lack of violence was a source of pride to the Cuban demonstrators, at least one of whom told reporters: "We showed them. We showed them the Cubans could do it without creating problems." The Cuban protestors were still fervently trying to influence policy, but their participation in peaceful demonstrations

[91] Leaflet attached to Finkel to Fascell, July 10, 1972.
[92] Bob Elder and Jim Savage, "Police, Leaders Timed Marches to Miss," *Miami Herald*, July 12, 1972.
[93] Robert D. Shaw Jr. and Jay Maeder, "Cubans, War Foes, Gays March Without Incident," *Miami Herald*, July 12, 1972.
[94] Elder and Savage, "Police, Leaders Timed Marches to Miss," *Miami Herald*, July 12, 1972.

was a source of civic pride. Others in the community felt differently and declined to participate because the marches served "no real purpose."[95]

The following month over 2,000 Cubans once again congregated in Miami Beach to march before the Convention Hall in which the Republican National Convention was being held. The Cuban exile newspaper *America Libre* reported that there were tense moments in which violence threatened between the exile demonstrators and the "hundreds of Vietnam veterans waiting to have a confrontation with the exiles." The demonstration once again was presided by Carlos Prío and while intended to influence the policies of the Republican Party, it was also attended by Cuban American Democrats like Benes and Alfredo Duran.[96] *America Libre's* editor, Daniel San Roman, also took pride in the behavior of the Cubans demonstrator in front of this Convention, contrasting it to the behavior of the "zippies and the yippies, shabby, traitors and enemies of democracy." San Roman was proud of the demonstrations before the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, but he warned his readers that they "did not mean that Cuba would be liberated, but they are a step on that road."[97] He was glad that Cubans could influence American elections and, by extension, American policy, but after Nixon's re-election that year he warned his readers again expectations running too high. While he was glad Nixon had defeated the "threat of a pro-Castro [George] McGovern," he prided himself in his newspaper's track record of reporting the truth as they saw it. In that spirit he had to admit that the staff of *America Libre* did not believe that Nixon would bring about the liberation of Cuba. Nixon's policy of détente had already shown them that while he was the better choice, no great

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[95] Roberto Fabricio and Raul Ramirez, "'We Showed Them," Say Proud Cubans," *Miami Herald*, July 12, 1972.
[96] "Reportaje Grafico del Gran Desfile de Cubanos Exiliados Ante la Convencion Republicana," *America Libre*, August 25, 1972.
[97] Daniel San Roman, "Despues de la Convencion Republicana," editorial, *America Libre*, August 25, 1972.

change would come about in Cuba because of him.[98] This message was a bitter pill to swallow for the supporters of a candidate that four years before had told a crowd of thousands of exiles that the objective of the United States needed to be the liberation of Cuba and the return of the exiles to the island where they could rebuild their broken lives.[99]

By the early 1970s most exiles were well aware that there was no magic bullet solution that would bring back the Cuba they had lost over ten years before. No one political victory would bring about an end to the Revolution. This did not mean that hope was lost among Miami's Cubans that there would be an eventual return home in a post-Castro era. While more and more former refugees were embracing American citizenship in an effort to influence policy at a local and national scale, others still refused to take this step for fear it was an admission of defeat. For all the predictions that the anti-Castro organizations of the past were dying out, they continued to be a presence in Cuban American politics. They were no longer the only approach to influencing the United States and the situation in Cuba. Instead there were new, local approaches that made politics of Miami as important to *el exilio* as those of Washington or Havana.

The political divisions among the exiles remained and deepened as variables related to party affiliations in the United States came into play. These divisions would only come to the surface more fully in the wake of the cessation of the Freedom Flights in April of 1973. The large scale refugee influx was, essentially, at an end. The years that followed would see many among

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[98] Daniel San Roman, "El Triunfo de Nixon no Es Necesariamente el de la Liberacion de Cuba," editorial, *America Libre*, November 10, 1972.
[99] Benjamin de la Vega, "Nuestro Objective es Liberar a Cuba: Nixon," *Diario Las Americas*, August 9, 1968.

the Cuban community focus their energies on solidifying the gains they had obtained in Miami since 1959. The new relative calm that set in after the end of the Cuban Airlift would not last, as different factions within the community began to turn on one another over the issue of diplomatic rapprochement with Castro's government and some of the conflicts between the Cubans and other groups of Miamians intensified. While the 1970s in Miami, as in much of the rest of the country, lacked the urgent eventfulness of the decade the preceded it and the decade that followed it, the city's residents would discover that the calm at the eye of the storm was relative.

# CHAPTER 4—"AT HOME, BUT HOMESICK": BILINGUALISM, LOCAL POLITICS, AND THE DIVIDED POLITICS OF CUBAN MIAMI, 1973-1980

The freedom flights ended on April 6, 1973. Between the start of the Cuban airlift in 1965 and its end, 3,048 flights brought 297,318 refugees to the United States.[1] While some refugees still entered the United States from third countries, the large scale migration from Cuba ended with the cessation of the freedom flights. With much of the Cuban exile community already resettled or in an economically stable position, the need for the Cuban Refugee Program began to wane. Over the next two years the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare sought to phase out the CRP only to meet with significant resistance from Florida's Governor Reuben Askew and Florida's Congressional delegation. In 1975, Howard Palmatier, director of the program, died unexpectedly. The vacancy of the position led several rival groups of Cuban Americans to pressure Gerald Ford's administration to appoint a member of their community as director. White House staffers supported the idea, but they expected that any candidate named to the position would invite the ire of one or more groups of political connected Cuban Americans.[2] The Ford administration appointed Dr. Ricardo Nuñez director of the Cuban

[1] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 43.

[2] Fernando E. C. de Baca to Theodore C. Marrs, March 24, 1975, Folder FG 23 3/20/75—4/8/75, FG 23 Department of Health Education and Welfare, Subject File, White House Central Files, Gerald Ford Presidential Library, Ann Arbor, MI. (Hereafter Ford Library.)

Refugee Program, a candidate who was supported by a section of the Cuban American community and had the support of the Inter-American Chamber of Commerce of Dade County.[3]

The concerns of White House staffers proved justified when Nuñez was immediately attacked by rival Cubans and members of the Cuban press as a detached, possibly corrupt millionaire who had been absent from any anti-Castro activity during his exile.[4] The attacks on Nuñez led administration officials to question the new CRP director's fitness. While Nuñez's work was not considered lacking, there was "sufficient controversy and criticism about him" to cause the Social and Rehabilitation Service of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to conduct a major program review and a federal audit of the Cuban Refugee Program.[5] Given that the mass migrations from Cuba were apparently over, the federal government used this investigation of the program to justify its eradication. By the end of the decade, the Cuban Refugee Program ceased to exist.

The controversy over Ricardo Nuñez and his tenure as director of the Cuban Refugee Program is representative of the Cuban American community's experience in the years after the freedom flights ended and before the Mariel boatlift of 1980. Cuban Americans had gained sufficient economic and political power during their tenure in South Florida and in other enclaves in the years after the refugee flow began. This power allowed them to directly engage high ranking federal officials and obtain their support in matters of policy. This also applied to the appointment of officials, including the selection of a Cuban American as head of the CRP. Much as they had been in the decade and a half after the revolution, however, the Cuban

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[3] Reinaldo Cruz to Gerald Ford, October 21, 1975, Folder—Nuñez Ricard, Box 2356, Name File, White House Central Files, Ford Library.
[4] "Atacan a Ricardo Nuñez," *Libertad*, August 15, 1975.
[5] Marjorie Lynch to Ted Marrs, July 9, 1976, Folder—Nuñez Ricard, Box 2356, Name File, White House Central Files, Ford Library.

community remained divided. Lines were drawn along differences in political leanings, class, age, and the embrace of the United States and American citizenship. These divisions would severely hinder the community's ability to project the power and prestige it had gained locally into the national and international scenes with any lasting impact during the 1970s.

Even as the Cuban American community engaged in internal disputes that sometimes resulted in violence and death, it also faced new challenges and opportunities from outside forces during this time period. Cuban Americans were more prosperous and influential in Miami than ever before during the 1970s, but this wealth and influence brought with it a backlash and new battles over bilingualism, education, and the growing discomfort of the city's traditional elites and institutions with the community's gains. Cuban Miami's gains also brought about the possibility of new relations with Cuba and with Fidel Castro's government. This would not come to pass. The divisions within the community would prevent any long-term understanding between the exiles and their home nation. As the 1970s came to a close, the Cuban community found itself on seemingly solid ground in Miami. Its inability to consolidate the myriad opinions of its members into a cohesive, united front would belie its ability to maintain a lasting influence over transnational trends and events. This inability, in turn, would shape the events of the decade the followed.

By the early 1970s, after more than a decade of the Cuban exile in Miami, many in the city were taking stock of the changes that had been brought about by the exodus, what further changes it would bring, and what the status of the Cubans was in Dade County. A 1971 article by Juanita Greene predicted that by 1975 Cubans would constitute one quarter of the residents

in Dade County. Estimates of the Cuban population in the County that year ranged between 225,000 and 261,000, depending on if one went by census numbers or market research studies. Cubans represented between 17 and 22 percent of Dade County's population of 1,268,000 people, already surpassing the 15% of the population made up by African Americans. Within Miami's city limits the concentrations of these two groups were more pronounced. The Cuban cluster around the Little Havana area accounted for about 80% of the population in the city's Southwest area. Of Miami's 335,000 residents about 120,000 were Latino/as and the overwhelming majority of this group was Cuban, constituting 36.3% of the city's population. The African American population constituted 23.7% of the population within the city. Greene noted that together these populations made up 59% of the city population, but that the possibility of a coalition between both groups to control the city was remote because there was not much communication between the two groups. Another roadblock to this possible collaboration was the fact that few of these Cubans had yet become American citizens. Between 1959 and June of 1970, 50,505 Cubans in the United States had become citizens. This number was set to increase rapidly, however, given that more than a third of that group had become citizens between 1969 and 1971.[6]

The following year, reporter Roberto Fabricio wrote a piece outlining the results of a survey that had been conducted among Miami's Cuban population by the *Herald*. The Cubans, the headline read, were "at Home, But Homesick" in Dade County. The survey of 600 Cuban-born residents showed that 79% of respondents indicated that they would like to return and live permanently in Cuba, but only 59% believed that the political climate would change enough to enable them to do so. Castro would have to be overthrown and socialism removed before they

[6] Juanita Greene, "Cubans in Dade: 1 in 4 by 1975," *Miami Herald*, June 18, 1971.

would even consider returning, stated 94% of the exiles.[7] The division between those who would return and those who would stay often had to do with age and with how long they had been in the United States. Younger exiles who had received less education were happier in exile than older, better educated exiles. This was not an absolute division. Dr. Antonio Garrastazu, a 70 year old exile, declared himself too old to return to Cuba to live, but he still hoped that his "old bones" would "rest with the soil that saw me come into this world above me."[8] Those old enough to remember a pre-Castro Cuba but young enough to feel like they could remake their lives on the island still held out hope. "Faith is the last thing I will ever lose," said one respondent.[9]

The *Herald's* survey found that the step of becoming a U.S. citizen had not been taken by a vast majority of Cubans in Dade County, but that political participation was high among those who had. One quarter of the Cubans in Dade had become American citizens by 1972 and within this group 89% were registered to vote, compared to 71% of the general population. Among Cuban registered voters 53% were registered Republicans and 40% were Democrats, with 7% remaining independents. Despite the fact that this was a much more even split than the internal conversations among Dade County Democrats, the survey indicated that 84% of

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[7] Roberto Fabricio, "Cubans—at Home, But Homesick," *Miami Herald*, October 29, 1972.

[8] A different study, conducted and published two years later by Miami-Dade Community College sociologist Juan Clark and Miami-Dade professor of social sciences Manuel Mendoza, suggested that older Cubans were unlikely to return to Cuban regardless of the changes on the island. The researchers conducted extensive interviews with 151 Dade County Cubans aged 55 and older and found that fewer than half said they would return to Cuba if Castro were overthrown. Given that this group would be the most likely to have had problems adapting to life in the United States, the researchers suggested that their study had wider implications for the idea that most Cubans were eager to leave their lives in the United States behind. Surveys like the *Herald's,* suggesting that the overwhelming majority of Cubans would return to Cuba the moment things changed, were called into question. Clark claimed that the findings in those studies resulted from built-in biases in testing procedures and from the reluctance of Cuban participants to give anything but the expected answer when the question was posed to them. See Humberto Cruz, "Dade Cubans won't return, study shows," *Miami News*, June 10, 1974.

[9] Roberto Fabricio, "Cubans—at Home, But Homesick," *Miami Herald*, October 29, 1972.

respondents were still planning to vote for Richard Nixon. One respondent indicated he would be voting reluctantly for McGovern, whom he held as an extremist, out of loyalty to the Democratic Party. The man refused to be identified in the article "because it is a touchy thing in the community."[10]

Another touchy subject in the community was the division between those who wanted to see the United States re-establish diplomatic relations with the Cuban government and those who vehemently opposed any sort of dialogue. Despite the significant opposition to the Castro regime both in the past and in the survey, 20% of respondents said they would like to see an American embassy reopen in Havana. Among this group, respondents were evenly divided between those who felt re-establishing relations would harm instead of validate the Castro's government and those who believed it should be done for humanitarian reasons. Whereas the latter group believed normalization would help get needed food and medicine to friends and loved ones still in Cuba, the former believed an American presence would allow for easier surveillance of the regime. One Cuban high school student believed that if the United States had an embassy in Havana "we could sneak in and know what is going on and Castro could not lie outright because there would be tourists and others with information for the people." Despite the desire of this section of the Cuban population, a full 75% of respondents were against the re-opening of an American embassy in Havana.[11]

The survey also supported the belief that resettled Cubans were returning to Miami after spending some time in other areas. While 70% of respondents indicated that they had been in the United States six years or longer, only 60% of them had been in Miami for that full

[10] *Ibid*.
[11] *Ibid*.

period.[12] A note written by sociologist Juan Clark appeared the following year in *Ideal* magazine, which established the percentage of the Cuban population that had returned from resettlement as 27.4%. Entitled "¿Donde Viven los Cubanos? ("Where do the Cubans live?"), Clark's article utilized data from the 1970 census which showed that close to 91% of the Cuban population of the greater Miami area lived in three discrete areas: Little Havana, the area surrounding Little Havana, and Hialeah. The greatest concentration was within the city limits of Miami, specifically in Little Havana and this area accounted for 56% of the Cuban population. The areas surrounding Little Havana were the home to close to one fifth of the Cuban population in the greater Miami area, while Hialeah was home to 12% of the Cuban population. Of those Cubans who had returned to Miami from resettlement, the greatest concentration could be found in the area around Little Havana, where returnees constituted almost one third of the area's Cuban residents, compared to 26% in Hialeah and 25% in Little Havana.[13]

Clark's data also suggested that an outward migration from Little Havana was a product of increased stays by Cubans in the United States. Over 80% of the Cubans in the peripheral area arrived in the United States prior to 1965, comparted to 70% in Hialeah and 63% of those in Little Havana. The greatest concentration of post-1965 Cubans lived in Little Havana. Economic pull factors likely played a part in drawing Cubans away from Little Havana. In the case of the returnees, 22.7% of those living in Little Havana's periphery reported that the creation of a business or some other economic opportunity had drawn them to that area. There was also a level of correlation between the spatial placement of the Cubans and their immigration and naturalization statuses. Those Cubans in Little Havana's periphery had the greatest proportion

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[12] *Ibid*.

[13] Juan M. Clark, "¿Donde Viven los Cubanos?," February 15, 1973, Box 50, Series III, Bryan O. Walsh Papers, Barry University, Miami, FL (hereafter cited as Walsh Papers).

of citizens at 48% In Hialeah 54.5% of Cubans were residents, but only 23.4% had become citizens, and in Little Havana almost half the Cubans were residents while only 26% had become citizens.[14] Without more data it is difficult to draw certain conclusions from the snapshot that Clark presented of the spatial placement of the Cuban community in Dade County as the 1970s began and the large scale migration from Cuba was ending. The available data does suggest that as refugees transitioned into residency and citizenship and into greater affluence, many moved away from the immediate vicinity of Little Havana's ethnic enclave without straying too far from the rest of their community.

By the mid-1970s, economic conditions for Miami's Cuban population continued to improve despite the shifting economic climate in the nation. A 1974 study by the Strategy Research Corporation found that Dade County's Latinos/as had nearly doubled their annual income in four years and had become a "dynamic force in promoting the (county's) economic health." The total annual income of this population had increased from $612,700,000 in 1970 to $1,100,000,000 in 1974. The median income for Latino/a families had also increased from $7,200 to $9,912 a year, and the unemployment rate for male household heads was 1.1% compared to the 4.9% county-wide unemployment. While the study was not specific to Miami's Cubans, the city's Latino/a population remained largely Cuban. The report also noted a population increase almost 50%, going from 299,217 in 1970 to 448,200 in 1974. The Freedom Flights had stopped in 1973 and the Strategic Research Corporation attributed a major part of the population increase to the return to Miami of families that had been previously resettled to other areas of the country.[15]

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[14] Clark, "¿Donde Viven los Cubanos?," February 15, 1973.
[15] Alan Gersten, "Survey cites growth of Latin community," *Miami News*, June 21, 1974.

Even as the economic fortunes of the general Cuban population and the other groups from Latin America that called Miami home were improving, the community's economic elite were also growing more formidable. The 1970s were a particularly pivotal moment for powerbrokers like former RECE member Jorge Mas Canosa. Mas Canosa was a veteran of Brigade 2506, though he was part of one of the troop detachments that were not able to deploy in Playa Giron. Upon his return to the United States he accepted the offer extended by the Kennedy administration through the Cuban Revolutionary Council for brigade members to be trained in and serve as part of the U.S. armed forces. He received his training in Fort Benning, Georgia and earned the rank of Second Lieutenant in the United States Army. Sensing that the United States was not fully committed to the Cuban cause, Mas Canosa left the armed services and returned to Miami, where he was working as a milkman at the time of his appointment to RECE's slate of representatives.[16]

As a RECE representative, Mas Canosa had received a salary and worked to lobby American lawmakers to advance the Cuban exile cause. He also showed a talent for fundraising. Mas Canosa worked with paramilitary groups and was tasked with providing funds with which paramilitary organizations like Comandos "L" could run commando style raids into Cuba, maintaining a campaign of harassment against Castro's regime. Mas Canosa left RECE in 1968 and returned to Miami to pursue new business ventures. That same year, a company called Church and Tower, originally founded in Cuba by the Torres and Iglesias families, incorporated in Miami. The company was to provide construction and maintenance services of telephone infrastructure in the United States and the Caribbean. The division of resources and

[16] Jorge Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," January 10, 1996, Folder 20, Box 1, The New Republic-Jorge Mas Canosa Collection, 1979-1996, Florida International University Special Collections, Florida International University, Miami, Florida. (Hereafter FIU Special Collections.)

management staff between South Florida and the company's other center of operations in Puerto Rico led to severe financial losses for the Miami operation. In 1969, Mas Canosa was offered half the shares of Church and Tower's American operations if he could perform a course correction for the company. Mas Canosa agreed and was sufficiently successful that by 1971 he bought out the remaining shares from the original owners, becoming the sole owner of what would become, in time, a multi-billion dollar technology and telecommunications company.[17]

Mas Canosa's rapid rise in economic circles was not, by any means, typical of the Cuban exile experience, but it was not unique. Other members of the community had become just as ingrained in South Florida's financial and business communities. This inclusion was such that by mid-1973 a new exile periodical, a magazine called *Bancos y Economia* (Banks and Economics) was created. While the magazine described itself as "The Interamerican Economics Magazine," editor Luis Fernandez Walpole chose stories that positively portrayed the economic contribution of the Cuban exile community to South Florida. The first issue of the publication, dated June, 1973, contained articles that drew attention to particularly successful Cubans. The articles had titles such as "Banks Run by Cubans Make Way in Dade County," "Manuel Balado: An Exemplary Cuban," and the magazine was supported by advertising from multiple Cuban owned businesses including radio station WFAB, "La Fabulosa."[18]

The staff of *Bancos y Economia* sought to serve the larger Spanish speaking community of South Florida and showed clear ambitions of finding an audience among Latin American investors, but it always maintained a heavy interest in Cuban American affairs. The publication's

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[17] Jorge Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," February 21, 1996, Folder 22, Box 1, The New Republic-Jorge Mas Canosa Collection, 1979-1996, FIU Special Collections.
[18] See *Bancos y Economia*, June, 1973, Exile Periodicals Collection, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL (hereafter CHC).

editors might run a cover story endorsing the candidacy of Puerto Rican businessman Maurice Ferré, who would become Miami's first Hispanic mayor and the first U.S. mayor born in Puerto Rico. This would be immediately followed by a story entitled "Cuban Bankers in Miami's Wall Street."[19] It might also be followed by a full page pictorial of Carlos Arboleya, Jorge L. Martinez, Orlando Baro, Carlos Garcia Velez, Daniel Loris, and Rafael Quintana with no other information save for their professional affiliations and the title "Six Cuban Bank Presidents."[20] The focus on Cubans who had reached high levels of success in Miami's banking industry seems self-congratulatory. The profiles of these figures and even the pictures of the Cuban bank presidents, however, also served a purpose for aspiring small businessmen. While the vast majority of exiles had had time to establish a work and credit history in the United States, the practice of character loans, so crucial in the 1960s, had left an impression on the Cuban community. While never stated outright in the pages of *Bancos y Economia*, these profiles could serve as signposts to exiles reading the publication of which banks to patronize and which banks might be more sympathetic in providing a loan. The focus on the top earning Cubans in South Florida's finance sector could be useful to exiles as individuals and small business owners in the area.[21]

The economic contributions of the Cuban exile community, along with the need for the Cubans and other Hispanics to navigate government services would become significant factors in one of the most divisive issues of the 1970s in South Florida: bilingualism. *Bancos y Economia's* editor, Luis Fernandez Walpole, wrote a short note in 1973 entitled "Español, Idioma Necesario" (Spanish, a Necessary Language). Fernandez Walpole argued that the constant

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[19] *Bancos y Economia*, November, 1973,4-6, Exile Periodicals Collection, CHC.
[20] *Bancos y Economia*, August, 1974,4, Exile Periodicals Collection, CHC.
[21] See *Bancos y Economia*, June, 1973 and August, 1974, Exile Periodicals Collection, CHC.

growth of Dade County's Hispanic population necessitated the presence of bilingual staff in government agencies and in public services. He lamented the fact that in post offices, in the Federal Building, and at the officers of Florida Power and Light, Hispanics were often met with the phrase "I don't speak Spanish." "It is necessary in a city like Miami, as well as in Miami Beach," Fernandez Walpole wrote, "which are gateways for the communication with Latin America that people who are in transit be waited on in Spanish."[22] Fernandez Walpole's justification for a bilingual system did not fit well with those services he mentioned. While some of these services might be used by tourists or businessmen making temporary stops in Miami, most of them were more closely associated with families and individuals living and working in South Florida. Fernandez Walpole was using the economic argument based on Miami's position in relation to Latin America to give him and his magazine a measure of protection as he entered a debate that was already raging in Dade County.

The previous year, a group of Cuban residents began a movement to have Dade County officially declared bilingual. Supporters of the movement contended that such a move would be beneficial for the county and that it would solve most of the serious problems faced by over 100,000 Dade County residents who spoke only Spanish. Cuban banker Bernardo Benes, one of the movement's organizers, charged that local government had failed the needs of this group where others had succeeded. "On the one hand," he told reporters, "you have private enterprise accommodating the Spanish-speaking because there is a profit in it and then you see tax-supported services are not available to the Spanish-speaking because government has not made the transition to bilingualism." Another member, lawyer Luis Botifol, used a similar argument to that put forth by Fernandez Walpole. He stated that the possible legalization of

[22] Luis Fernandez Walpole, "El Director Opina," *Bancos y Economia*, June, 1973, 3.

two languages was meant as a positive addition and not an imposition on any other group. "I think that rather than to say that Dade County would be pressured into coping with the bilingual problem," Botifol stated, "I would like to see our enlightened leaders face up to the many advantages that passing a bilingualism resolution would bring about."[23]

There was opposition to the resolution from the moment it was proposed, but others saw it as absolutely necessary. *Herald* reporters tested the assertions made by the members of CUBANOS by calling 83 taxpayer-supported agencies and asking in Spanish "Do you speak Spanish, please?" He found that 13 of those agencies had bilingual personnel who could be of assistance, 17 spoke Spanish but were "of no real help," 28 spoke English but tried to help as best as they could, and 25 who answered were curt and hung up. When Gomez called Hialeah City Hall he found no Spanish speaking operators despite the high number of Cuban families in the area. He had the following conversation with the operator who answered his call:

> **Operator**: City Hall, May I help you, please?
> **Gomez**: Si señora, usted habla Español, por favor?
> **Operator**: (Indignant) Speak English.
> **Gomez**: Me no speak English.
> **Operator**: Well don't call here if you can't… (Operator hangs up on Gomez.)

While the Hialeah operator might have been particularly rude, the most problematic exchange occurred when Gomez called the South Miami Fire Department and was told "I'm sorry, you don't understand me and I don't understand you. There's nothing I can do for you." Gomez contrasted these interactions with the steps taken by for-profit entities, mentioning the Spanish language information hotline set up by Eastern Airlines and the bilingual crew of sales associates at Southern Bell's business office. When he questioned a Southern Bell spokesman about the establishment of this team, the company's spokesman stated that the Spanish speaking families

[23] Roberto Fabricio, "Bilingual Status for Dade Sought by Cuban Residents," *Miami Herald*, May 29, 1972.

in Dade County were in need of good service and he declared the practice to simply be "good business."[24]

The establishment of this good business practice required some prodding. Just the previous year, Benes had contacted Southern Bell's Florida management to address a company policy which prohibited their staff to speak in Spanish.[25] Benes and other Cubans addressed the shortfalls of Southern Bell's practices often, in an attempt to pressure the company into the changes it would eventually make. This was the case when Pedro G. Mendive, Dean of the Havana Bar Association (in Exile), spoke before the forum of the Community Relations Board of Metropolitan Dade County. Mendive mentioned a series of advertisements run by Southern Bell that emphasized how in an emergency Southern Bell's telephone services would always help customers get to the right people. This, Mendive stated, was not true. For non-bilingual Latin Americans, both residents and tourists, Southern Bell would be of no help in an emergency. Unlike other companies, such as the airlines operating in Miami, Southern Bell had no competition and felt no need to reach out to the Spanish speaking population. Mendive marveled at the fact that bilingual operators were available in Canada, Mexico, and before the revolution in "old Havana. But never in the 'gateway' of the Americas. NEVER IN MIAMI!"[26] Members of the Cuban community continued to pressure not only Southern Bell, but other companies and entities in South Florida in an attempt to increase the availability of bilingual services. By January of 1973, some in Miami's Spanish language press were decrying any restriction on the use of Spanish as a violation of the equal protection clause of the U.S.

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[24] Chuck Gomez, "Spanish Gets You Nowhere in a Crisis," *Miami Herald*, May 29, 1972.
[25] Bernardo Benes to Lawrence B. Sheffey, February 23, 1971, Folder 31, Box 4, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[26] Pedro G. Mendive, "In Re: SOUTHERN BELL TEL & TEL. COMPANY," May 6, 1971, Folder 32, Box 4, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

constitution.[27] This emphasis on bilingualism illustrated not only the powerful drive toward local activism of many of Miami's Cubans, but it also illustrated their growing economic and political clout. The solution they sought from local government would be recognition of that clout.

On April 16, 1973, the Dade County Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution 502-73 declaring Dade County a Bilingual and Bicultural County. County Commissioner Harry Cain called on Bernardo Benes to present the resolution after having worked with the commission for almost a year in its creation.[28] Benes addressed the commissioners and clearly stated that voting for the resolution did not support any sort of progressive agenda, but rather reflected Miami's reality: "You are going to make official what is already a fact of life, that Dade County is already a bicultural county."[29] The resolution declared Dade County "legally, morally and historically obligated to aid our Spanish-speaking population in achieving the goals they have traveled so very far to share," specifically citing the difficulties the county's Spanish speaking population had in communicating with government agencies and their staff. While the resolution stated that many among this population had retained the language and culture of their native lands, the drafted language made it clear that this was not just a humanitarian gesture, but recognition of something owed to the city's Hispanic community. The resolution read, "Our Spanish-speaking population has earned, through its ever increasing share of the tax burden, and active participation in community affairs, the right to be serviced and heard at all levels of government." The Board of County Commissioners, which did not include a single Latino/a, then voted unanimously, with one absence, to declare Dade County a bilingual and

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[27] José M. Angueiera, "Nuestro Derecho a Hablar en Español, *Diaro Las Americas*, January 10, 1973.
[28] Evaristo R. Savon, "Por Unanimidad se Aprobó Declarar a Dade Bilingüe," *Diario Las Americas*, April 18, 1973.
[29] Sam Jacobs, "Bilingual Bill Passed by Dade," *Miami Herald*, April 17, 1973.

bicultural County where Spanish was to be considered the second official language and to create a department named the "Division of Bilingual and Bicultural Affairs" under the office of the County Manager to implement the resolution.[30]

The vote for the resolution was attended by a significant crowd of Spanish speaking residents who celebrated the passage of the resolution, rising to a standing ovation when Commissioner Harvey Ruvin answered "si" to the roll call vote instead of "yes." While attendees were excited about the outcome of the vote, officials were not certain what the ramifications would be of the legislation they had just enacted. When asked what the resolution meant, its sponsor, Mayor Jack Orr, confessed he really did not know. "But we'll almost certainly have all (street and office) signs printed in both English and Spanish," Orr continued, "and have bilingual people in all the government offices." Many suspected that the resolution would be largely symbolic, but it was a positive step for those who had campaigned for it.[31] County officials embraced the vote in good faith and took steps to carry out the resolution. By late May, a task force of county employees had been created to plan and monitor the implementation of the resolution. This task force consisted of five employees of Latin American background representing some of the major groups in Dade County: three Cuban Americans, one Puerto Rican, and one Mexican American.[32]

Not all Dade residents welcomed the passage of the resolution. The *Herald's* editorial board, for example, came out against the resolution two days after it passed. The commissioners could still be made to understand the potential problems of the resolution,

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[30] Board of County Commissioners of Dade County, Florida, Resolution Declaring Dade County a Bilingual and Bicultural County, April 16, 1973, Folder 61, Box 7, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[31] Sam Jacobs, "Bilingual Bill Passed by Dade," *Miami Herald*, April 17, 1973.
[32] R. Ray Goode to Mayor and Members of Board of County Commissioners, May 29, 1973, Folder 32, Box 4, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

which the *Herald* saw as myriad. Embracing Mayor Orr's uncertainty as a starting point, the *Herald* speculated that the consequences could "prove costly in taxpayers' money and in community cohesiveness." The editorial board acknowledged that both English and Spanish were spoken in Greater Miami, and suggested that the residents who spoke each language had been "getting alone well for years." Whether the author of the editorial had forgotten the *Herald's* own reporting from the previous year or simply meant to gloss over it is unclear. What was clear was that the newspaper objected to the issue of bilingualism being addressed through legislation. "Why belabor the obvious," the editorial asked, "by translating the de facto situation into a de jure complication?"[33] Benes responded to the *Herald* by affirming his believe that the most important outcome of the resolution would be to "change the attitude of some people in Dade County who are supposed to be servicing the total community and unfortunately are not, thus causing serious harm to the Spanish-speaking population who need service."[34]

While the bilingual ordinance appeared to be a definitive, if ill-defined victory for Miami's Spanish speaking population, the issue of Anglo-Cuban polarization became one of the major political concerns of the 1970s in Miami and only intensified after the passage of the resolution. Benes's disagreement with the *Herald* was not the start of the division, indeed it was not the first time that the banker and his allies had taken exception to the representations of Cubans in Miami's press. At a session at the second annual Cuban Medical Convention, held at Miami's Sheraton Four Ambassadors in July of 1970, the issue of media reporting on the Cuban community was discussed on a panel featuring both Benes and Monsignor Bryan Walsh. Benes took exception to the implication that the federal government was spending "fabulous

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[33] "Que Pasa?," editorial, *Miami Herald*, April 18, 1973.
[34] Bernardo Benes, "County Must Serve Spanish-Speaking," letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, April 25, 1973.

amounts of money" on Cuban refugees. Benes did not offer any figures, but stated that based on available data 40% of refugees did not cost taxpayers anything and only 50,000 of the total refugee population were receiving any kind of financial aid.[35]

More problematic for both Benes and Walsh, however, were allegations by the press in the weeks previous to the convention of the existence of a "so-called Cuban Mafia." Benes pointed out that the number of Cubans who participated in criminal activities was tiny when compared to the sum total of refugees who had entered the United States after the revolution.[36] Walsh made mention of a recent article stating that 50% of all drugs in Miami were being consumed by Cuban youths. The Monsignor sought to correct this notion by stating that, to his knowledge, the use of drugs by Cuban youth was less than that by American youth.[37]

After the passage of the bilingual ordinance, Cubans and other Latinos reported that anti-Cuban sentiment had reached an all-time high. When questioned by reporters, these members of Miami's Hispanic community did not mention any connection between the Cuban community and crime in Dade County. Instead they listed the reasons for this animosity as "the increased militancy Cubans are assuming in local matters especially when faced with discrimination; a greater awareness that their presence is no longer temporary; envy or resentment over their economic success and fear of being displaced by bilingual people." There

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[35] "…Says 'Cuban mafia' label is 'irresponsible reporting,'" *The Voice*, July 10, 1970, Folder 199, Box 25, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

[36] Benes was correct in this assertion. The issue of criminal activity in the Cuban community, however, was not the purview of the English language press in the city alone. Luis Fernandez Walpole, of *Bancos y Economia*, ran a piece a few years later on the effect of "Cuban Gangsterism in Miami." Walpole's concern was less about the image this produced, having a Cuban mafia which engaged in drug trafficking, prostitution, and illegal gambling, but rather on their predatory activities towards other Cubans. Fernandez Walpole castigated the community's "so-called 'civic leaders'" for remaining silent as these gangs attacked small Cuban business like markets, bodegas, and cafeterias. See "Gangsterismo Cubano en Miami," *Bancos y Economia*, August, 1974,4, Exile Periodicals Collection, CHC.

[37] "…Says 'Cuban mafia' label is 'irresponsible reporting,'" *The Voice*, July 10, 1970, Folder 199, Box 25, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

was also a belief that Dade County's Liberals and Democratic political power structure were also threatened by a population they saw as more conservative and more likely to register Republican. When reached for comment by a reporter, Benes cautioned that polarization was so bad that it might reach a point of open confrontation. Even as he made this dire prediction, Benes highlighted the positive steps taken by County Manager Ray Good and Metro government in general, noting that the percentage of Latino/as hired by the county had almost doubled in two years from six to ten percent.[38]

Not all Cuban Americans were as conciliatory as Benes was, particularly when it came to the Metro's government and school systems. Seeing a need for activism on behalf of Miami's Spanish speaking community, several community activists created SALAD, the Spanish American League Against Discrimination, in 1973. The intent of the organization was to stop what were perceived as slanderous attacks against Miami's Hispanic community as well as to ensure greater participation in local politics and society. By 1975, SALAD was formally accusing the two largest employers in the area, the public school system and Metro's government, of unfair hiring practices. The slow increase in hiring by these two entities, when compared to the significant growth of Miami's Spanish speaking minorities, led SALAD chairman Javier Bray to the "inescapable conclusion" that the public sector was "systematically excluding and discriminating against Latins." SALAD members pointed to the Dade County school system's own figures, which showed that while 27% of the county's students were of Hispanic origin, only 12% of school administration staff and only 7% of teachers were Latino/as.[39]

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[38] Hilda Inclan, "Cubans concerned about 'anti-' feeling," *Miami News*, November 19, 1974.
[39] "Exiled Cubans in Florida grow more militant," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 16, 1975.

SALAD's more confrontational style would continue to flourish as divisions became more entrenched. Future SALAD president Osvaldo Soto entered the organization in 1977 and focused on issues of Hispanic participation in community policing matters in the Miami Police Department and Metro Law Enforcement. Soto recalled finding that there was one single Hispanic police officer in Dade County. Soto approached Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre regarding the lack of representation of Spanish speaking communities in the Miami Police Department. Ferre and the city's first African American City Manager, Howard Gary, then instructed Miami's chief of police to hire several Latino officers only to have the chief quit rather than comply. Soto was proud of the increased Hispanic presence in MPD from that point on, but individually and as a part of SALAD he continued to push for greater inclusion in the greater Miami area. Prominent Latino/as came into conflict with the political structure of the city of Miami Beach because their groups were unrepresented in the city's governmental management structure. Soto and a friend split the cost to have an airplane with a flying billboard to circle over Miami Beach with a sign that read "Miami Beach = Hispanic Discrimination."[40]

SALAD also came into conflict with Hialeah's Mayor, Dale Bennett, when he made comments to a *Miami Herald* reporter painting the Cubans in his city in a poor light. Bennett claimed to know of hundreds of cases of senior citizens who were forced to move out of their homes because of the Cuban influx. He then charged the Cuban community with wanting to take over South Florida and accused those refugees who had not yet become American citizens with delaying so they could retain their refugee benefits. Bennett also pointed toward the issue of bilingualism as a flashpoint when he suggested that "the Anglos carry a grudge against the Cuban businesses" because those businesses used Spanish language signs to advertise their

[40] Osvaldo Soto, interview by Julio Estorino, June 27, 2011, Cuban Heritage Collection Luis J. Botifoll Oral History Project, CHC.

establishments. Within days four hundred angry Latino/as were meeting to demand Bennett's resignation or apology, a demand supported by organizations like the Hialeah People's Association and SALAD.[41]

Miami's American born residents had their own grievances against the city's Hispanic community, generally, and towards the Cubans, who still represented close to 90% of the population specifically. One of the most significant grievances regarded the hiring of Spanish speaking people in private industries related to Miami's tourist industry. Calls of reverse discrimination resulted from the increased need for Spanish speakers in department stores, restaurants, hotels, and airlines.[42] As Richard McEwen, the chairman and chief executive officer of the Burdines department store chain indicated in a letter in support of bilingual education, these types of industries required Spanish speaking staff because of the current economic patterns in Miami. "Our Dadeland, Downtown Miami, Miami Beach, and 163rd Street stores do an extensive business with Spanish speaking people not residing in the United States," McEwen wrote, "on some days perhaps fifty per cent of our Downtown store's business is the result of tourists' purchasing in very large quantities." He remarked that Costa Rica Airlines used to have three flights a day carrying shoppers to Mexico City, but since the Cuban influx those flights now went to Miami, where affluent tourists could shop in their own language.[43] McEwen did not offer exact figures in his letter, but in 1978 alone Miami saw 500,000 Latin American visitors who spent, on the average, over $1,000 each in the city. "Cuban entrepreneurs and bilingual

[41] "Exiled Cubans in Florida grow more militant," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 16, 1975.
[42] *Ibid*.
[43] Richard McEwen to Phillis Miller, January 18, 1978, Folder 8, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

salesclerks," read one report, "have helped shape the city into a full-blown Latin American shopping mecca."[44]

Despite the increasing importance of trade and tourism from Latin America to Miami's economy and the calls from business leaders for more bilingual staff, the issue of bilingual education was controversial in the 1970s. When discussing the friction between the Spanish speaking communities and the English speaking communities in Miami, one of the most cited wedge issues was bilingualism in Dade County public schools. Opponents complained about being forced to subsidize a program primarily for Cuban children through their taxes, insisting the money could be better spent. Miami's Coral Way Elementary was the site of the first federally funded bilingual program in the postwar era when a bilingual immersion program was created there in 1962.[45] By 1975, of over 100 public schools in Dade County only four were totally bilingual; students spent took half their classes in Spanish and half in English. Eight others were nearly bilingual and the remaining schools had some bilingual program. Most had classes including English for Spanish-speaking students, Spanish as a foreign language, and Spanish for Spanish-speaking students. In late 1974, a member of the Dade County school board named Linton Tyler put forth a motion that would have stopped any further expansion of the bilingual program and instead would have intensified the English instruction of Spanish-speaking students. Tyler's motion was voted down, much to the jubilation of the Cubans attending the session, but the controversy over this particular policy did not cease after this vote.[46]

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[44] Susan Harrigan, "Blemished Bloom," *Wall Street Journal*, November 28, 1979.
[45] Anita Casavantes Bradford, *The Revolution Is for the Children: The Politics of Childhood in Havana and Miami, 1959-1962* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 190.
[46] "Exiled Cubans in Florida grow more militant," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, March 16, 1975.

Tyler continued to argue that the bilingual education program was both expensive and inefficient and that any expansion would simply compound the program's failure. In response to these assertions, Miami City Commissioner Manolo Reboso wrote Tyler and suggested that there was a greater enthusiasm for the program than its critics suggested. Given that enrollment in Spanish classes in the first through sixth grades was entirely voluntary, an enrollment of 32,000 American children spoke "of enthusiasm and a great deal of interest on the part of American parents who wish to improve the cultural and educational skills of their children." Reboso also pointed to statistics that showed how the longer English speaking students had participated in the Spanish language courses, the higher their test scores in English language reading tests were. Conversely, Spanish language students who participated in the Spanish S class, the Spanish class for Spanish speakers, also had higher scores in English reading skills tests. Reboso stated that he understood how such an expensive program could be hard to justify in other Florida counties with fewer Spanish speaking students, but Dade County had 516,000 Spanish speakers and the city of Miami had a 54% Latin population. This demographic reality made the program essential not only for the County's Hispanic population but for its English speaking population as well. If the program continued and improved, then American children would be "adequately prepared through the school system to compete on an equal basis with bilingual Latins in the job market and cultural differences will not be the source of friction, misunderstanding and hostility."[47] Miami's economy had changed so fundamentally that it now seemed as if a lack of Spanish language skills was a greater hindrance than a lack of knowledge of English.

[47] Manolo Reboso to Linton Tyler, July 13, 1977, Folder 7, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

At the same time Reboso was sending a letter to Tyler in 1977, representatives of a group of Anglo and Latino businessmen that included the presidents of Jordan Marsh, Burdines, Southern Bell, and the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce of Greater Miami came before the Dade County School Board and declared that knowing Spanish was an economic necessity in Dade County. The group had been meeting since the previous year and had written a letter to the School Board urging them to fully embrace bilingual education. At the time of the meeting this group castigated the members of the board for not having made a greater commitment to the program. Bernardo Benes, a member of the group, took it upon himself to do away with the harmful myths surrounding bilingual education. The primary myth that needed to be eliminated was that bilingual education was somehow unpatriotic. "It is less patriotic to have a black or white child whose first language is English find himself without a job because the spot went to a Hispanic child who speaks both languages," Benes told the School Board.[48]

The advocates for bilingual education were ultimately unsuccessful in persuading the School Board to make Spanish instruction mandatory for all students.[49] This outcome was problematic for many among Dade's Cuban Americans, who saw it as a slight against their community. Others were less troubled by that development. The *Herald's* editorial board had supported Tyler's proposal from the outset, deeming it "A Sane Approach to Bi-Lingualism."[50] This opinion did not help the widening rift between the city's largest newspaper and Dade's Cubans. The *Herald* fully recognized the reality of the changes to Miami's demographics and the

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[48] Gloria Marina, "Importantes hombres de negocios abogan por mejor educación bilingüe," *El Miami Herald*, July 14, 1977.

[49] This did not stop Cubans of means from providing their children with a bilingual education. By the mid-1970s more than 25 private Cuban schools were operating in the greater Miami area. These schools not only provided bilingual education, but they also taught children the Cuban exile version of Cuban history. See Casavantes Bradford, *The Revolution Is for the Children*, 192.

[50] "A Sane Approach to Bi-Lingualism," editorial, *Miami Herald*, January 22, 1975.

importance of the Spanish speaking market. This led to the creation in 1976 of *El Miami Herald*, a Spanish language newspaper under the *Herald's* corporate umbrella. The newspaper's editorial direction, however, left much to be desired to many in the Cuban community and *El Herald* remained largely an appendage of the parent publication.

In 1978, the *Herald's* executive editor, John McMullan attempted to address the animosity between his newspaper and the Cuban community in Miami when he wrote a piece entitled "Open Letter to My Cuban Friends." McMullan reaffirmed his previously stated belief that the Cuban community had enriched Greater Miami both culturally and economically. He then sought to address a meeting held on August 3, 1978 where several Cuban American leaders had gathered to discuss "so-called 'unbearable insults'" to their community. McMullan reported on the discontent expressed at the meeting, ranging from a sign printed on a street near Little Havana that read "Speak English!" to the failure of the School Board to make bilingual education mandatory to the perceived anti-Cuban slant of the *Herald* itself. He quoted an anonymous Cuban friend who claimed that there were "those among us who are seeking to exploit polarization: they forget that we came here as refugees and that many of us have become successful in a way that we never dreamed because of the opportunity this country gave us." McMullan made it clear that he respected that Cuban friend and others like him, but he believed it was time for them to act. "It is time for some of the silent majority among the Cubans to get involved," he declared, "the silent majority of decent law-abiding family-loving Cubans who already contribute so much to this area." To get involved meant to participate in every phase of community life, not only in the area's economy and cultural life.[51]

[51] John McMullan, "Open Letter to My Cuban Friends," *Miami Herald*, August 6, 1978.

McMullan accused the Cubans of being insular and of ignoring the plight of other groups in the greater Miami area. Being involved, he wrote, did not mean "holding back or forming Cuban-only organizations that will have the inevitable effect of furthering polarization." Reflecting on what he saw as the nation's unfortunate history, McMullan noted that those who had faced discrimination began to discriminate against others once they were assimilated into power structures. He declared that The *Herald* was trying to carry out a responsibility to the total community, "to our black, Anglo, Wasp, and Jewish populations, and to you new Latin members as well." This responsibility made it the *Herald's* job to report "fairly" and "fearlessly" in order to create an informed citizenry. McMullan was both defending his newspaper's perceived anti-Cuban bias and attempting to spur the creation of new leadership in the Cuban community that would be more responsive to the *Herald's* reporting. He admonished that too many Cubans were holding back and letting the "opportunists" among them have too much influence. At the same time, too few of the "responsible Cubans" were offering themselves up for public office or were willing to become involved in the community at large. "No, mis amigos," he wrote, "we have reached a sad day in South Florida if a part of the community feels that the only way to achieve desirable goals is through polarization."[52]

Unsurprisingly, some Cubans were rather displeased with McMullan's assertions about the Cuban community and its role in creating polarization in Miami. One letter writer called the editorial "patronizing in tone and accusing in insinuation," because it implied that the Cuban community or at least Cuban representatives were the major cause of polarization in the area. "It takes a great deal of bad faith at best, and naiveté at worst," wrote Julio Castano, "to make this statement. This may sound paradoxical, but I assure you it isn't—I'm accustomed to the

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[52] *Ibid*.

*Herald's* bad faith, naiveté would be novel." Castano then accused the *Herald's* editorials and coverage of some issues of polarizing the larger community. He advised McMullan that the needed to apply the same rule to his journalists that the *Herald* wanted to apply to others. Furthermore, if the Cuban community had a leadership that was forced upon them by "the Establishment," and if this group was "getting uppity" then the blame should be shared, "since many were hand-picked, nourished and forced on us by this Establishment." Furthermore, if the Cuban community's political base was not up to McMullan's standard, then their economic based surpassed it. If their clout was not what he expected, then their "moral strength, again surpasses it tenfold." Castano asked McMullan to spare the Cubans his condescendence and pontification because he was simply not qualified to make such judgments. If the chasm of polarization was to be bridged then the *Herald* was well equipped to do its part. "I should not solely be the burden of our Cuban community," Castano wrote.[53]

McMullan's letter also resulted in a scathing editorial from radio station W-QBA, "La Cubanisima," which declared the letter nothing more than a way to cover past and current mistakes by the *Herald*. The editorial took the form of an open letter to McMullan, so he could see that "some of us Cubans DO read The *Miami Herald*, though we may be in the minority in regards to reading tastes and preferences." La Cubanisima saw in the letter an old attitude of the *Herald's*, that Cubans should "Americanize to the point that they forget their culture, their language, their customs and even the right to have a free homeland without communist oppression." They denied that there were such things as Cuban-only organizations, stating that even the most militant Cuban exile organizations would gladly take on any American-born recruit willing to help their cause in good faith. If such organizations existed, the editorial went

[53] Julio A. Castano to John McMullan, August 8, 1978, Folder 8, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

on, it would only be because of years of isolation and discrimination of their community by a group of Americans collectively called "the Establishment," working under the "absurd thesis of 'take over,'" the idea that the Cubans wanted to take all political power in Dade County for themselves.[54]

The *Miami Herald*, an organization near and dear to McMullan's heart, was a part of the Establishment, the editorial indicated. The newspaper was called "The *Miami Herald*," after all, a city composed of 60% Spanish speaking people, most of them Cuban. How many Cubans were on the upper echelons of the Herald's management? "What is the answer…" asked La Cubanisima, "ZERO… NONE…? Could we not say then that the Editorial Board of The *Miami Herald* is an organization made up solely of 'non Cubans'?" How could the *Herald* truly claim to serve the entirety of the community if 60% of that community was unrepresented in their Editorial Board? "Would it not be better and more representative," the editorial asked, "to call your newspaper 'The *Collier County Herald*' or 'The *Boca Raton Herald*'… instead of 'The *Miami Herald*'?" The editorial also claimed that the electoral system in the county was biased to the point of being nearly unconstitutional and that that seemed to suit the *Herald* just fine. It recalled that in a recent election, when a Cuban candidate for county commissioner was defeated by the African American incumbent in a tight election, the *Herald* had run headlines declaring the victory of black votes over Cuban votes. How, then, could McMullan speak about polarization?[55]

McMullan most likely expected this exact reaction from outlets like WQBA. The *Herald* was seen by many in the Cuban community as an antagonist long before it was published.

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[54] Jorge Luis Hernandez, "Editorial," August 10, 1978, Folder 8, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[55] Hernandez, "Editorial," August 10, 1978.

McMullan, however, was part of a "Non-Group" of Cuban and Anglo leaders who were seeking to address issues of polarization in Miami.[56] This group sought to improve the relations between the Cuban American community and other groups in the area. The problem of polarization was not so easily resolved, and it would continue well into the 1980s when the battles over bilingualism and the place of the Cubans in Miami would reach a feverish pitch. The individuals who comprised the "Non-Group" and others like them could not tackle this issue without greater centralization. The Cuban community was also rife with its own cleavages along political and generational lines. These divisions would shape the way in which Miami's Cubans would relate to one another and how they would project the local economic and political power they had garnered since 1959 in their dealings with the federal government that was once their patron.

One of the most significant divisions within the Cuban community was between those who chose to become American citizens and those who had not yet chosen to do so. While an increasing number of Cubans were becoming Cuban Americans during the 1970s, this decision was not without controversy. Despite the adoption of the Cuban Adjustment Act in 1966, the number of Cubans in Dade County who had become citizens remained relatively low. In 1973, Juan Clark found that U.S. citizens constituted 36.4% of the Cuban population, while permanent residents made up 45.2%, and those with refugee status came to 18.5%. When he polled those Cubans who had not become American citizens, his respondents fell into three categories in regards to plans to become naturalized citizens:

[56] There are multiple pieces of correspondence between Bernardo Benes, McMullan and other members of the "Non-Group." See Folder 7, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

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|---|---|
| No plans to become a citizen | 20.6% |
| Does not know | 35.3% |
| Planning to become a citizen | 44.1%[57] |

Becoming an American citizen allowed Cubans to have a say in the politics of their adopted home and allowed them greater agency in ensuring that the economic and social gains made by their community would be solidified. A majority of Clark's respondents, however, either did not know if they would become American citizens or had absolutely no plans to do so. Ever since the path to citizenship was opened for the exiles, the debate about whether or not to embrace that path had raged within the community, both in private spaces and in the media. Those who were opposed to becoming citizens often complained about their children being made to pledge allegiance to the U.S. flag in school. "Many Cubans believed that becoming an American citizen meant assuming a new identity, emotionally erasing any memory of life prior to taking the oath of citizenship," writes historian María Cristina García.[58] For many Cubans, to become an American citizen meant to abandon the cause of a free Cuba in favor of their adopted home. This was the same sort of issue of divided loyalties that had so pained Pedro Pan children in the previous decade; the fundamental question of whether loyalty to one's adopted home meant disloyalty to the nation of one's birth.

As the 1970s wore on and more and more Cubans chose to become American citizens, the divide between those who sought to embrace citizenship and those who did not was often generational. When questioned about the greatest challenge to the Cuban community in Miami, Bryan Walsh suggested that it was the fact that Cuban children were not "Cuban in the sense that their parents were Cuban. Neither are they American in the sense that American

[57] Clark, "¿Donde Viven los Cubanos?," February 15, 1973.
[58] García, *Havana USA*, 111.

children are. They are a mixture of both cultures." He warned that the reaction of the Cuban community to this fact would decide if there would be conflict or a drawing together of the best of both cultures.[59] This did not always mean that Cuban children were more inherently Americanized than their parents. The debate of whether to become an American citizen or not was part of a larger debate within the Cuban American community about what it meant to be Cuban. "College students were particularly caught up in this debate over identity and national allegiance," writes García. These college students had often left Cuba as teenagers and in their negotiation of both cultures were keenly aware of their liminal placement. These students often joined organizations that took a sterner line regarding issues of identity and nationality. Some among them "became more staunchly nationalistic than their parents, and they castigated the community for forfeiting its ideals."[60]

Other Cubans saw no intrinsic problem with becoming American citizens. Some professionals in fact saw immense benefits in becoming citizens, which was often a necessary step in returning to their chosen fields. Others simply had resigned themselves to a lengthy stay in the United States and had developed a loyalty towards their adopted home which they did not see as incompatible with their loyalty toward Cuba.[61] The tension between parents and children in the Cuban community over citizenship and the opportunities it presented was a common enough situation to be portrayed in the popular, Miami-produced situation comedy *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* Conceived by Professor Manuel G. Mendoza and brought to the screen in 1977 by Luis Santeiro, *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* was the first bilingual situation comedy produced in the United States and the first situation comedy produced for the Public Broadcasting Service.

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[59] "…Says 'Cuban mafia' label is 'irresponsible reporting,'" *The Voice*, July 10, 1970, Folder 199, Box 25, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[60] García, *Havana USA*, 112.
[61] *Ibid*, 113.

Set in Little Havana, the show portrayed the everyday life and struggles of a multigenerational Cuban family in the United States. The series won six regional Emmy awards, nine special awards from the Association of Critics and Commentators on the Arts, and was named "Freshest T.V. Series" for 1978 by *Nuestro* magazine. Despite being about a Cuban family and entirely bilingual, the program's appeal went beyond South Florida and other areas with high Latino/a populations. *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* was shown by 126 PBS stations in 34 states, covering most major television markets and several smaller ones. The program was successful enough to warrant a limited partnership between Santeiro and United Cinema Enterprises in the early 1980s to explore the possibility of producing a film entitled *Family Secrets*, which would have had similar storyline using many of the same actors from the show in new roles.[62]

Between 1977 and 1980, *¿Qué Pasa, U.S.A.?* detailed the comedic adventures of the Peña family, composed of the Spanish speaking grandparents, the bilingual parents, and the mostly English speaking children, living in the United States and facing situations common to immigrants from Latin America and specific to the Cuban community. The show's pilot, "La Fiesta de Quince" (Sweet Fifteen), introduced the format of the show where characters communicated with one another freely using both English and Spanish. To make the show accessible to English speakers, the creators gave Carmen, the Peña daughter and only member of the household to be born in the United States, a friend named Sharon. Sharon was a dumb blonde stereotype who spoke no Spanish and could be counted on to ask questions about what was going on in any Spanish only exchange. The program illustrated the way in which the Peña children straddled both cultures. In the pilot episode Joe, the Peña's son and eldest child, is described as a "Kissinger Cubano" because of his attempts to join the "cool kids" club at school.

[62] "¿Qué Pasa, USA?," undated with handwritten notes indicating document was written in the early 1980s, Folder 15, Box 3, Series I, Luis Santeiro Papers, CHC.

Joe is upset because his sister Carmen is getting a "fiesta de los quince," which she refers to as a "sweet fifteen," to her father Pepe's exasperation. Joe believes that this party will ultimately ruin his chances to join the club. Joe goes on to explain the difficulties of the Cuban American identity: he feels pushed and pulled from one culture to the other. He is Cuban at home and American at school. When his grandfather claims that things were not so difficult in Cuba, Joe accedes that things might have been better there, but they all needed to adjust to a new reality.[63]

In the eleventh episode, entitled "TV Interview," Joe is interviewed by a local television reporter seeking to talk to a Cuban student about how they felt in the United States. Upon hearing the news his son is going to be on television, Pepe proudly exclaims that only a few years back they came to this country as refugees, as "nobodies" but now his son would be on television. When asked by the reporter if he felt Cuban or American, having been born in Havana but having lived in the United States since the age of three, Joe responds that he feels "pretty American… but then I also feel very Cuban." Joe gets into trouble with his family when he mentions there is a certain amount of culture shock in going from interacting his American friends to interacting with his Cuban grandparents. He states his grandparents are having problems not only to living in the United States, but "adjusting to life in this century!" Joe then follows up his description of his parents being very grateful to the United States with a statement about how they are always complaining that the country is a real mess, prompting Pepe to exclaim "Mañana mismo nos deportan!" (We'll be deported tomorrow!) Joe then magnifies the blunder by stating that his parents are relatively progressive, stating that most

[63] Luis Santeiro, "Fiesta de Quince," teleplay, undated, presumably 1977, Folder 1, Box 1, Series 1, Luis Santeiro Papers, CHC.

Cuban parents seem like broken records going on about how much better everything was in Cuba.[64]

Pepe threatens to sue the television station after a neighbor informs him that Joe has been deemed a shame to the Cuban community and that a petition is being passed around demanding the family move out of the city. This prompts the reporter to offer a follow-up interview to the entire family and to a suspicious Sharon who rightly notes that the reporter just wants her to be a token for his "inter-cultural pals" angle. True to form, more mishaps arise when the follow up interview occurs, as when Pepe openly states to the reporter that before the Cubans arrived, Miami was just a country village. As the family negotiates the usual cultural and generational shenanigans, the episode takes a humorous look at other issues, from the mentioned insistence of everything having been better in Cuba, to the irate American born neighbor who is "sick" of having to deal with Cubans who live nearby. In the end, the script calls for the family's close ties and ability to forgive one-another any transgression to be illustrated through their communal watching of the news story in the episode's final scene.[65]

Not all conflicts could be resolved so easily. This was well illustrated when the show tackled naturalization. The program's 15th episode, entitled "Naturalization," starts with Pepe explaining to Carmen that the home improvement projects he is engaging in are not meant to signal any permanence in Miami, "Nosotros estamos en Miami de pasada" (We are just passing through Miami) he tells her. Juana, Pepe's wife finds a bottle of champagne as she cleans out items from the kitchen cabinets. Pepe explains that he had purchased the bottle in 1962 and he continues to save it for their return to Cuba. Conflict arises when Joe comes home and recounts

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[64] Luis Santeiro, "The T.V. Interview," teleplay, slated for taping June 14, 1977, Folder 8, Box 1, Series 1, Luis Santeiro Papers, CHC.
[65] Santeiro, "The T.V. Interview," June 14, 1977.

how he has been told that many college scholarships require applicants to be citizens. As a minor he needs one of his parents to become a citizen first, which Pepe refuses to do saying he is not ready to become a "gringo." Carmen notes that she is an American citizen, but Pepe insists that her birth in the United States was an accident; she was meant to be born in Cuba. Father and son clash over the desire to become an American citizen until Pepe tells Joe that he is a traitor, "a traitor to the name of José Manuel Peña," his name and that of his father, grandfather, and great grandfather before him.[66]

Pepe becomes even more agitated when Adela and Antonio, his wife's parents, reveal they have also decided to become American citizens in order to gain the vote. Joe notes that Pepe is always going on about how people have not say under communism, but as long as Pepe does not have a vote he does not really have a say in the United States either. Juana informs Pepe she will help Joe get a scholarship, even if it means becoming an American citizen. Later Juana and Joe write and perform a song, "Y Vamos Caminando" (And We Walk On), which encapsulates the conflict:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Juana**: | A donde van las costumbres | (Where do customs go? |
| | me tengo que preguntar, | I must ask myself, |
| | supongo que el tiempo las cambia | I suppose time changes them |
| | como cambia la orilla del mar, | as the shoreline changes, |
| | los viejos las cultivan, | the elderly cultivate them, |
| | los jóvenes buscan razón, | the young seek a reason, |
| | y lo que una vez fue exilio | and what was once exile |
| | se convierte en emigración. | becomes immigration.) |
| **Joe**: | How can I yearn for what I hardly knew? | |
| | How can I feel the same way you do? | |
| | I don't remember what I didn't live. | |
| | What I never had I cannot give. | |

[66] Luis Santeiro, "Citizenship," originally entitled "Salad Bowl," teleplay, 1977, Folder 12, Box 1, Series 1, Luis Santeiro Papers, CHC.

**Juana**: Y vamos caminando (And we go walking
el tiempo va pasando and time goes on
los niños van creciendo children grow
los viejos muriendo the old die
y los soñadores—se van cansando. and the dreamers—grow tired.)

**Joe**: You miss the past and want a world that's gone.
There's nothing there for me and I must move on.
and try my best to find a way
to live in the world we have today.

**Both**: Y vamos caminando
el tiempo va pasando
los niños van creciendo
los viejos muriendo
y los soñadores—se van cansando.[67]

The episode closes with a discussion between Pepe and Juana where she asks him if he really means that he will never become an American citizen. Pepe tells her he never said that, but as he holds his champagne bottle he states that if he ever becomes an American citizen he will buy another bottle, the one he has is for Cuba. The original script called for Juana to lightly knock on Pepe's head to indicate that he's *cabezon*, stubborn, before ending the episode with a kiss between the couple. The version that made it to air, however, saw Pepe leave the room after telling his wife the bottle of champagne was for Cuba and Juana looking after him before moving to a different part of the house herself.[68] The ending which was broadcast reflected the more somber tone of ultimately making the decision to become an American citizen. Naturalization was an issue that illustrated the tensions within the Cuban American community, between embracing the exile dream of a post-Castro Cuba and becoming full members of American society. It could become a source of division between families and friends and between those

[67] Translation mine.
[68] Santeiro, "Citizenship," 1977.

Cubans who sought an investment in their immediate future and those who clung to an idealized past they hoped would be the basis of an eventual future on the island.

Even those who chose to make the transition and become American citizens were often plagued by doubts about the decision and nostalgia about Cuba. On July 4, 1978, 2,141 new citizens took the Oath of Allegiance in a mass naturalization ceremony at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Following the ceremony one Cuban woman explained the mixed feelings the ceremony brought about. "This is a day of great joy, but also of great sadness for me," Normal Suarez de Alvariño told a reporter, "But in the end, we have to think of the future, because the past is gone." These new Cuban citizens sought to fully participate in and embrace their adopted country while still holding on to their roots. Another new citizen expressed her joy at becoming an American, but remarked sadly that during the ceremony she thought quite a bit of her Cuban homeland. When asked for the reason they became American citizens, respondents provided largely practical reasons. Some explained that citizenship brought about full rights and participation in American society, with the right to vote coming to the forefront.[69]

While a significant portion of the Cuban community had not yet chosen to take the step toward citizenship or were actively antagonistic to the choice, there were many who were seeking to start on the path toward citizenship. Despite the passage of the Cuban Adjustment Act almost a decade earlier, by the mid-1970s some politically powerful exiles had grown concerned that bureaucratic roadblocks were slowing down the process of exile stabilization, often by years. In advance of a meeting in December of 1975, the Florida chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, Jose Manuel Casanova, wrote a letter to President Gerald Ford regarding the plight of these refugees. Casanova stated that Cuban refugees living

[69] Roberto R. Brauning, "Nuevos ciudadanos sienten alegría y tristeza," *El Miami Herald*, July 5, 1978.

and working the United States that had been trying to become residents and hoped to become citizens had been delayed by periods of three to four years. Casanova assumed that "reduced staffing and some feet dragging" by the Immigration and Naturalization Service was to blame. It was in both the best interest of the United States and the Cuban American community that the refugees "be absorbed at an accelerated rate into the mainstream of the American system." The Republican National Hispanic Assembly recommended that the President issue an executive order to the Immigration and Naturalization Service to expedite the method of processing U.S. residence applications of Cubans living in the United States as well as those of Cuban U.S. residents seeking citizenship. The president was also asked to promote legislation to automatically move Cuban refugees already living in the United States to resident status with minimum paperwork.[70]

The Ford administration was under pressure from the Republican National Hispanic Assembly on other issues at that very moment, including greater participation by Hispanics in positions of authority in the federal government.[71] Casanova was also seeking a firm statement that would "end speculation on coexistance [sic] with the Cuban communist government within the foreseable [sic] future."[72] With an election year looming, President Ford instructed his staff to investigate the exact nature of these delays and what could be done about them through executive action. Within a week of the meeting between the President and the Republican Hispanic National Assembly, the administration had established that "the point at which our Cuban friends are experiencing some difficulty is in obtaining a Permanent Resident Alien visa."

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[70] Jose Manuel Casanova to Gerald Ford, December 10, 1975, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly (2), Box 28, Robert T. Hartman Files 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[71] Gwen Anderson to Robert T. Hartmann, December 11, 1975, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly (2), Box 28, Robert T. Hartman Files 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[72] Jose Manuel Casanova and Alicia Casanova to Gerald Ford, December 10, 1975, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly (2), Box 28, Robert T. Hartman Files 1974-1977, Ford Library.

Despite the passage of the Cuban Adjustment Act, which guaranteed the Cuban refugees approval for their permanent resident status without having to apply from outside the country, the refugees were still subject to the limitations on such visas established by congress. Each year a maximum of 120,000 visas were available to people born in Western hemisphere countries, which were provided on a first-come, first-served basis.[73] This limitation was creating a backlog among the refugees attempting to establish their residency of 70,000 applications.[74]

President Ford sought a solution he could enact in order to gain the solid support of RHNA, but officials in the administration were skeptical about the power of the executive branch to affect the backlog. James Cannon, director of the Domestic Council, was insistent that because the limitation was a matter of law, there was little to be done without Congress enacting new legislation.[75] By February 1976, the administration sought to issue an executive order that would ensure that Cuban adjustments did not count against the Western hemisphere quotas and requested a legal opinion from the Assistant Attorney General at the Office of Legal Counsel, Antonin Scalia.[76] While awaiting the Office of Legal Counsel's opinion, the president instructed the Attorney General to take any necessary action, administrative or legislative to assure that Cuban refugees could attain permanent resident status without delays due to the immigration quota system.[77] In August of that year, Scalia produced a twenty-three page legal

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[73] Jim Cannon to Bob Hartmann, December 16, 1975, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly (2), Box 28, Robert T. Hartman Files 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[74] L. F. Chapman, Jr., Commissioner Immigration and Naturalization Service, to Robert T. Hartmann, January 13, 1976, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly—Cuban Refugees (2), Box 21, Gwen A. Anderson Files, 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[75] Gwen Anderson to Robert T. Hartmann, December 18, 1975, Folder—Republican National Hispanic Assembly (2), Box 28, Robert T. Hartman Files 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[76] Bobbie Greene Kilberg to Antonin Scalia, February 12, 1976, Folder –Naturalization of Cuban Refugees, Box 6, Counsel to the President Bobbie Greene Kilberg 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[77] Bobbie Greene Kilberg to Jim Connor, Paul O'Neil, and Tom Aranda, September 15, 1976, Folder – Naturalization of Cuban Refugees, Box 6, Counsel to the President Bobbie Greene Kilberg 1974-1977, Ford Library.

opinion stating that it was within the law and the powers of the executive to order a change of policy by the Department of Justice.[78] Prompted by the determined legality of the change in policy, the Immigration and Naturalization Service announced in September that Cuban refugees would no longer have to compete for places within the Western Hemisphere quota.[79] Coupled with the removal of the policy-level obstacle, the Ford administration also provided additional manpower to the Miami offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Bureau. Other INS offices handling a backlog of Cuban cases would not immediately receive an increase in manpower, despite similar backlogs.[80] This is unsurprising, given that the original request had come from politically power and well connected South Florida Cubans.

The Ford Administration was particularly keen on courting the Cuban American political leadership in South Florida in the run-up to the 1976 presidential election. In December of 1975, within a week of Casanova's request to the White House, Ronald Reagan publicly met with deposed Panamanian President Arnulfo Arias and with members of the Cuban exile community. Reagan used this opportunity to establish his foreign policy bona fides by allying himself with Arias and against Omar Torrijos in the U.S.'s conflict with Panama over the Canal Zone. It also served as an opportunity for Reagan to back the cause of a post-Castro Cuba and potentially win the support of the Cuban American community in Florida.[81] Ford had some cause to be concerned about obtaining this group's support. Earlier in the year the President had made a statement indicating his administration would maintain a hardline stance against Castro's

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[78] Antonin Scalia, "Memorandum for the Attorney General," August 30, 1976, Folder –Naturalization of Cuban Refugees, Box 6, Counsel to the President Bobbie Greene Kilberg 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[79] Press Release, September 16, 1976, Folder –Naturalization of Cuban Refugees, Box 6, Counsel to the President Bobbie Greene Kilberg 1974-1977, Ford Library.
[80] Hector D. Carrio to Evelle J. Younger, October 6, 1976, Folder—Cannon, James, Box 120, Robert T. Hartmann Papers, Ford Library.
[81] Stephen Low to Brent Scowcroft, December 16, 1975, Folder—CO 39 Cuba, 6/1/75—12/31/75, Box 15, CO 39 Cuba, Subject File, White House Central Files, Ford Library.

government. Less than a week later, however, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared his support for lifting the Cuban embargo if the rest of the Organization of American States voted in favor of this action.[82] While Ford would win the nomination in 1976, he lost badly among Cuban Americans in Florida's Republican primary, obtaining only 29% of the vote to Reagan's 71%. By April of 1976, Ford's campaign was concerned about the 50,000 votes that Carter could take from Ford because of a lack of attention to the Cuban community. "Recognizing Cuban-Americans is of premier importance," wrote President Ford Committee member Ed Debolt.[83] DeBolt's efforts to gain the Cuban vote as a deciding factor in the coming electoral contest would be for naught.[84] Gerald Ford lost Dade County, the state of Florida, and the Oval Office in the 1976 presidential election.

The aims and policies of Ford's successor, Jimmy Carter, would expose and exacerbate another major fault line within the Cuban American community. Carter was a controversial candidate among Cuban Americans. During the campaign, he had stated that American relations with Cuba might be improved "on a measured reciprocal basis."[85] There had been discussions of coexistence with Castro's regime during the Ford Administration. Jose Manuel Casanova had written a position paper arguing against any sort of coexistence with Cuba on behalf of the Florida members of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly and the Dade

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[82] Maurice A. Ferré to Gerald Ford, March 3, 1975, Folder—CO 39 Cuba, 4/1/75—5/31/75, Box 15, CO 39 Cuba, Subject File, White House Central Files, Ford Library.

[83] Ed DeBolt to Jerry Jones, April 29, 1976, Folder—DeBolt Subject File—Cuban, Box A13, Chairman's Office, President Ford Committee Records, 1975-1976, Ford Library.

[84] DeBolt's efforts with the Cuban Americans were an attempt to get the best result possible in what was still a highly Democratic county. A study conducted on behalf of the Ford Administration indicated that Democrats outnumbered Republicans in the greater Miami area by slightly more than two to one. See Decision Making Information, "Miami Impact Study and a Retrospective of National, Houston, and Topeka Attitudes," February, 1975, Folder—Public Opinion Polling Miami Impact Study February 1975, Box 163, Robert T. Hartmann Papers, Ford Library.

[85] Robert M. Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba: Fidel Castro, Bernardo Benes, and Cuban Miami* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 89.

County Republican Executive Committee. Casanova argued that if, in spite of the Cuban Republican arguments against it, the federal government decided that coexistence was to exist, it should "only be on our terms." Those terms were tantamount to a capitulation to the exiles by Castro:

1. If Castro frees all political prisoners under supervision of the Red Cross (including 1000 U.S. citizens).
2. If Castro declares himself publicly against all subversion in the Continent and vows not to support guerilla groups.
3. If all Russian, Chinese and foreign troops leave Cuba.
4. If free elections nationwide are conducted, with participation of Cuban refugees, and supervised by a satisfactory international body.
5. If free exit and access to Cuba by nationals as well as citizens of foreign nations are guaranteed.[86]

Casanova's position ran directly opposed to any of the Castro regime's interests. He and those Cuban Americans aligned with him were making a clear statement that they would not consider any sort of rapprochement with Castro's government. This sentiment had long been mutual. Since the start of the exile, Castro had taken every available chance to loudly denounce the *gusanos*, the worms, as he called those Cubans who had left after the revolution. As late as 1975, he had indicated that the exiles would never be forgiven for deserting their homeland and that they would never be allowed to return to the island.[87]

The extreme positions represented by Castro and Casanova did not encompass all Cuban Americans or all Cubans. For some young exiles, the tension between their adopted home in the United States and their need to assert their Cuban roots led to new directions in Cuban exile politics. One group, Agrupacion Abdala, grew out of groups of young Cubans on

[86] Jose Manuel Casanova to Gerald Ford, "The Cuban Paper," October 1974, Folder 7, Box 1, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.
[87] García, *Havana USA*, 47.

college campuses seeking to maintain cultural ties with one another. They challenged the abandonment of democratic principles by many exile organizations in their struggle against Cuba's revolutionary government. Criticizing ties and support of rightist military dictatorships like that of Chile's Augusto Pinochet. Other groups of young Cuban Americans had been radicalized on college campuses by the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. These groups sought to reconnect with their Cuban roots by lobbying the Cuban government and United Nations officials to allow them to return to the island for visits. This lobbying helped bring about changes in Cuba's visitation policy. Castro's government first allowed those who had emigrated from Cuba prior to 1959 to visit, as many of them had been sympathetic to the revolution. In the mid-1970s, the Cuban government removed the visitation restriction from those exiled Cubans who had been under the age of eighteen at the moment they left the island, and granted visas first in small numbers then in larger blocs to allow for visits by Cuban exile youth groups. These visits were controversial on both sides of the Florida straits. Cuban parents often vehemently opposed their children's return to Cuba. Visiting students were told to tell Cuban locals they were Puerto Rican because of the high politicization of the exile in the revolutionary discourse.[88]

The issuing of these visas was a sign of a measured, gradual thawing of relations between the United States and the Cuban government that had begun during the Ford administration. The election of Jimmy Carter had a significant impact on this thawing as his commitment to human rights led him to seek out improved relations with Latin America, a region riddled with repressive dictatorships. In the view of one scholar, this commitment would be exploited by Castro, who used the issue as "a wedge to attempt to end the economic

[88] Maria de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 89-90.

embargo and restore diplomatic relations."[89] After Carter took office in 1977, the United States and Cuba took a step towards the resumption of normal diplomatic relations through the establishment of interest sections in Havana and Washington.[90] This establishment of relations was approached cautiously by both governments, neither wanting to appear weak before the other. Federal officials were also concerned about the possibility of upsetting the Cuban community in the United States. Soon after Carter's inauguration, officials sought out Miami Mayor Maurice Ferre and long-standing Cuban American Democrat Alfredo Duran and asked them for advice on the issue. Duran advised them that the Cuban community would be divided on the issue. "Some would react adversely to normalization efforts claiming that the pace will be too rapid and leave outstanding issues unresolved," noted a report of the meeting, "others will see in normalization a means to reunite families and improve the care of Cuban aged and ill in both countries."[91]

Duran further cautioned them that a normalization of relations with Cuba could cause an increase in the already existing problem of terrorism in Miami.[92] While paramilitary organizations had remained active in their attempts to disrupt Castro's government through raids in and around Cuba, the years after the end of the Freedom Flights saw a marked increase in the violence perpetrated by exiles upon other exiles and upon those who they saw as enemies to their cause. Between 1973 and 1977 Cuban exile organizations and individuals, including Alpha 66 and Omega 7, had attempted or successfully executed 92 bombings.[93] Soon after Carter's inauguration, Dade County Mayor Steve Clark and other local government officials

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[89] Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 88.
[90] García, *Havana USA*, 47.
[91] Cyrus Vance to Jimmy Carter, February 5, 1977, Folder 5, Box 12, Plains File, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA. (Hereafter Carter Library.)
[92] Vance to Carter, February 5, 1977.
[93] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 102.

signed a letter to President Carter asking for immediate investigation into the terrorism occurring in Dade County. The Justice Department had also received requests from U.S. Attorney Bob Rust and U.S. Senator Dick Stone of Florida asking for FBI assistance with the issue of terrorism. While this was seen as a significant problem by the people of South Florida, the Justice Department indicated that FBI involvement was unlikely due to the lack of jurisdiction.[94]

In order to get as much support for the potential normalization of relations with Cuba, members of the administration sought to meet with potential allies in the Cuban American community. In late 1977, Alfredo Duran and the White House attempted to organize a meeting between National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and "several younger and more progressive Cuban-Americans."[95] Members of the administration also received news from Bernardo Benes that he had been approached by members of the Special Forces of the Interior ministry of Cuba while on a trip to Panama in August of 1977.[96] Benes had ties to the White House due to his close ties to the Carter campaign, for whom he had served as Latin coordinator.[97] Benes was unsure as to why he had been approached, but it has been suggested that it was done because of his closeness to the Carter administration, his high public profile in Miami civic activities, and because the Cuban government wanted "persons sufficiently idealistic to act as go-betweens Havana and Washington," who could also work discretely without news leaking to the rest of the Cuban community.[98] With the approval of Washington, Benes began a

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[94] Jim Purks to Jack Watson, January 31, 1977, Folder ST 9 1/20/1977—8/31/1978, Executive, Box ST-7, States-Territories, Subject File, White House Central File, Jimmy Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.
[95] Robert A. Pastor to Zbigniew Brzezinski, October 8, 1977, Folder 4, Box 11, Staff Material: North/South, Carter Library.
[96] Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 4.
[97] *Ibid*, 81.
[98] *Ibid*, 5.

series of behind the scenes negotiations, returning to Cuba after 18 years in exile and meeting with Fidel Castro several times.

Benes's trips and other back channel negotiations led to solid plans, implemented in 1978, to serious discussions between the Cuban government and the American government about greater rapprochement. The Cubans sought to appeal to Carter's interest in human rights by suggesting his government release political prisoners for certain concessions from the U.S. government. American officials were cautious and sought to understand the Cuban approach and the mixed signals they were getting, but hoped to also obtain a reduction of the Cuban presence in Angola. Internal communications within the Carter administration show that American officials believed Castro had four main reasons to pursue a relationship with the United States outside of the normalization of relations, a lifting of the trade embargo, and a withdrawal from the Guantanamo Bay naval base. A normalization of relations with the United States would both strengthen the Cuban economy and reduce its dependence on the Socialist bloc. On the diplomatic front, the Americans believed Castro wanted to gain leverage in his relations with the USSR and to bolster his appeal as a non-aligned leader. These moves could also improve his relationship with and influence over the Cuban American community. The most significant effect of renewed relations with the United States would have been psychological. If in the eyes of most Cubans, officials argued, the revolution was only legitimized by Castro moving away from the U.S.'s "pater" figure, then "by the logic of a lingering paternalism, his revolution can only be considered complete when the U.S. accepts it."[99]

[99] Viron Vaky and Robert Pastor to David Aaron and David Newsom, August 4, 1978, Folder 2, Box 60, Zbigniew Brzezinksi Material: Brzezinski Office File, Staff Office Files, Carter Library.

By September of that year, negotiations had slowed to a crawl due to Castro's commitment to his operations in Africa. Castro sought to outmaneuver the reluctant American officials by circumventing them and holding a press conference in front of Cuban exile journalists in which he invited the exile community to enter into a dialogue with the Cuban government on issues including the fate of political prisoners and a possible family reunification program. Castro was careful to refer to the exiles not as gusanos, but as "the Cuban community abroad." As such he authorized Benes to bring to Havana a group of Cuban Americans to discuss those issues in November of 1978. Castro was eager to tap into the significant economic resources of the exile community and to offset the international criticism of Cuba based on its human rights record. The Carter administration sought not to publicly involve itself with the dialogue beyond what was absolutely necessary, but it was pleased with Castro's release several political prisoners before the arrival of the dialogue group. National Security Advisor Brzezinski qualified it as "another significant human rights accomplishment for this Administration," in an internal White House memorandum.[100] Castro's invitation was unexpected, most of the exile community was not aware of the secret negotiations that had been occurring between the United States and the Cuban government and the sudden conciliatory gesture was both surprising and controversial, causing significant division within the Cuban American community.[101]

Some were very supportive of the news and its possibilities. Alfredo Duran spoke to administration officials and conveyed his enthusiasm about the prisoner release and urged them to move forward with normalization as a way to increase American influence over Castro. He

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[100] Zbigniew Brzezinksi to Hamilton Jordan, September 18, 1978, Folder 7, Box 45, Staff Material: North/South, Carter Library.
[101] García, *Havana USA*, 47.

also suggested to them that Carter's policy on Cuba was having a positive effect on the swing in support from the Republican to the Democratic Party for the Cuban community in Florida.[102] Others were eager to go even further than the Carter administration or than the larger group of negotiators in creating greater ties to Cuba. The members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the name taken collectively by a group of Cuban American youth who had previously visited the island through the easing of visa restriction, would seek to pursue a more radical agenda that included the right of repatriation, the right to study in Cuba, the release of political prisoners, and other suggestions.[103] Many others were quite eager to see the results of the negotiations, hoping to see family members they had left behind years (if not decades) before.

Others directly opposed any possibility of negotiating with Castro. Groups like Alpha 66 publicly sought to form a coalition to draft a document explaining their view that any negotiation with Castro was antithetical to the cause of a free Cuba. This caused some division even among those who normally supported Alpha 66. One woman wrote the leaders of the organization and explained that if the exile community refused to enter into a dialogue with Castro then it was giving him the entirety of the power in making the decision on whether or not to release the political prisoners being held in Cuban prisons. To refuse to negotiate would create a vacuum that would necessarily then be filled by the U.S. government, which would act in its own best interests toward a normalization with Cuba and with less regard for the exiles and the political prisoners. By refusing to negotiate, they were playing right into Castro's hands. "I want to state here," she wrote, "that to refuse to negotiate with Castro at this moment is equivalent to POLITICAL SUICIDE by the exile." It was easy to deny Castro the dialogue to retain

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[102] National Security Council North-South Evening Report to Zbigniew Brzezinksi, September 8, 1978, Folder 1, Box 15, Zbigniew Brzezinksi Material: Staff Evening Reports File, Staff Office Files, Carter Library.
[103] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 95.

one's dignity, but that dignity would be better served through political action in the service of the larger cause.[104]

The trip was a controversial subject for the Cuban American community, but it went on as scheduled. The dialogue took place over two sessions held in November and December of 1978 as 140 Cuban exiles returned to Havana for the event. Political scientist Maria de los Angeles Torres, then a member of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, met Cubans from throughout the United States representing a broad range of political factions and social backgrounds.[105] While Torres was fascinated by this diversity, Benes's memories of the discussions and of this diversity of thought and background were mostly negative as he witnessed how "delegation members divided into factions, suspicious of one another." In one particular incident, Benes had his conversation with a group of Protestant ministers interrupted when he was roughly shoved by one of the men accompanying another delegation member.[106] Benes was already feeling pressure for his role in the *dialogo* before he went to Havana with the delegation and before the extent of his involvement in back channel negotiations with Castro was revealed. He carried with him to Cuba photographs of a group of about twenty organized picketers, including Alpha 66's Andrés Nazario Sargén, who began to protest in front of his bank, Continental National Bank of Miami, on a daily basis. Castro, he remembers, laughed hysterically when he saw the photos. Benes, however, was not amused, telling Castro, "it may seem humorous for you in Havana, but it is not humorous to have this every day in front of your office."[107]

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[104] Natasha Mella to Conrado Rodriguez and Andres Nazario Sargen, September 19, 1978, Folder 2, Box 3, Alpha 66 Records, CHC.
[105] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 95.
[106] Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 125.
[107] *Ibid*, 120.

The talks resulted in agreements including the release of over 3,000 political prisoners, permission for current and formers prisoners to immigrate to the United States with their families, permission for those with family in the United States to leave the island, and permission for exiles to visit Cuba.[108] Although these developments seemed promising, they served to enrage a significant section of the Cuban American community. Many of Little Havana's *periodiquitos* lashed out at the possibility of any form of normalization of relations with Cuba. In early 1979, a new *periodiquito* launched and declared itself to be "with Cuba and against the traitors." *Latigo* (The Whip), was named after the biblical passage where Jesus expelled the money lenders from the temple. It declared that Cuba was not negotiable, and that between the exile community and Fidel Castro there was "a sea covered in bodies, a prison full of pain and a national slavery, that no one can erase."[109] In February, *Latigo* denounced the "infiltration" of the Cuban exile community by Castro sympathizers and agents who sought the dialogue with Castro. It also castigated President Carter, the "champion of 'human rights,' who sees traits of kindness and generosity in the Beast of Birán."[110] The following month the newspaper published an open letter to Jimmy Carter from the Movimiento Revolucionario Frank Pais, an exile organization that opposed any dialogue with Castro. The letter indicated that the authors spoke out as members of a community that had demonstrated its ability to work and build up economic strength and to improve cities like Miami, while the president's foreign policy sought to engage with Castro's "murderous regime."[111]

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[108] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 95.
[109] "Soy El Director de 'Latigo,'" editorial, *Latigo*, January, 1979.
[110] "Con Cuba, Contra los Traidores," editorial, *Latigo*, February, 1979.
[111] Moviemiento Revolucionation "Frank Pais," "Carta Abierta al Presidente James Carter," *Latigo*, March, 1979.

Upon returning to the United States many of the dialogueros found themselves ostracized from the communities and groups they had helped build. Bernardo Benes's role in dealing with Fidel Castro was revealed by a *Washington Post* article that recounted how he had been approached by Cuban officials in Panama and how he and Castro had worked behind the scenes before the announcement in September of that year. Even before the article was published, Benes was already receiving death threats from different exile organizations.[112] When in March of 1979 Benes sent a plea in English and Spanish to all of Continental National Bank's customers for employment accommodation for the arriving political prisoners he was met with significant backlash. He was called a traitor and a communist, had his life threatened, and found that none of his powerful friends in Miami stood up for him. He was, suddenly, a pariah.[113] Benes even found himself the target of a failed assassination attempt in March of 1980.[114]

Organizations like Alpha 66 aided in ostracizing him from Miami's Cuban community. Alpha 66 founder Antonio Veciana had publicly identified Benes as a de facto agent of the State Department and not an infiltrator employed by Castro before the dialogueros traveled to Havana.[115] This, however, was too fine a point of distinction for the organization. In an interview given much later, Veciana's co-founder Andrés Nazario Sargén stated that he had no personal dislike for Benes and that he was acting in the interests of the U.S. government, but that regardless he was the enemy, "he is a traitor." Domingo Moreira, who would be a founding member of the Cuban American National Foundation in the following decade, stated that Benes

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[112] Ward Sinclair, "The Two Sides of a Negotiator for Castro's Prisoners," *Washington Post*, December 3, 1978.
[113] Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 135.
[114] *Ibid*, 196.
[115] Antonio Venciana, statements to WQBA, transcript, October 5, 1978, Folder 494, Box 57, Bernardo Benes Papers, CHC.

being shunned was to be expected. "His motives could have been humanitarian, but he was authorized by the Carter administration to suggest there would be policy changes that would alleviate tensions with Cuba," Moreira indicated, "this was unacceptable."[116]

While Benes found himself ostracized from the Cuban community and even the Anglo business community with which he had had so much contact in Miami, he did not lose his life. Throughout 1979, the exile organization known as Omega 7 claimed responsibility for more than twenty bombings of the homes and businesses of dialogue members and for the assassination of Carlos Muñiz Varela, a twenty-six year old member of the Antonio Maceo Brigade. "Members of the Antonio Maceo Brigade lived in constant fear," wrote Maria de los Angeles Torres, "we were afraid that the events we sponsored would be bombed."[117] Even under threat of death Benes and other Cuban Americans sought to continue the dialogo. A second group of 168 exiles returned to Cuba, but little of consequence was accomplished due to mutual mistrust and a lack of follow-through on the part of a Carter administration that was internally divided on the question of Cuba.[118]

Benes remained undeterred in trying to facilitate the arrival of the political prisoners Castro had released to the United States. In September of 1979, he and Alfredo Duran again contacted the Carter White House in an attempt to secure 5,000 parole visas for the former political prisoners. Despite the agreements reached during the dialogo, the U.S. government had been proceeding very slowly in processing the entry of the political prisoners. Benes and Duran insisted that the United States had a moral responsibility to the prisoners because most of them had served long sentences as a result of their involvement in anti-Castro operations

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[116] Quoted in Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 135.
[117] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 100.
[118] Levine, *Secret Missions to Cuba*, 136-139.

sponsored by American intelligence agencies in the 1960s.[119] Officials within the Carter administration saw value in the proposal; it was "a way for the Administration to 'declare victory' on the human rights issue." It also made economic sense. With the Cuban Refugee Program ending, the federal government was not eager to take on another charge. Duran and Benes were willing to commit the Cuban American community to finding jobs and handling resettlement on their own.[120]

Within months, however, the Carter administration and the Cuban American community would be faced with a much larger refugee challenge. After years without any large scale migrations from Cuba, a massive new wave of refugees would soon be landing on the coasts of South Florida, once again testing local, state, and federal authorities. This new wave would also test the Cuban American community in new ways, exposing even more divisions within the community, forcing them to defend their accomplishments to the city and to the country, and putting many of them at odds with a new generation of refugees who did not resemble them or the Cuba they remembered.

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[119] Bernardo Benes and Alfredo Duran to Phil Wise, September 21, 1979, Folder 2, Box 9, Donated Historical Material—King, Mary, Carter Library.
[120] Mary E. King to Alonzo L. McDonald, October 16, 1979, Folder 2, Box 9, Donated Historical Material—King, Mary, Carter Library.

# CHAPTER 5—"WILL THE LAST AMERICAN TO LEAVE MIAMI PLEASE BRING THE FLAG?": THE MARIEL BOATLIFT, LOCAL POLARIZATION, AND THE POLITICS OF IMAGE IN MIAMI, 1980-1982

"They were like wolf packs running loose in the streets—hordes of crazy men with tattooed arms, and loaded guns in their belts," read the *Reader's Digest* piece published in December of 1982, "the vast majority of Cuban-Americans, honest and hard-working refugees called them *escoria*, scum."[1] The article, entitled "From Cuba with Hate," was a scathing indictment of the newest wave of refugees from Cuba, those who arrived during the Mariel boatlift, between April and September of 1980. These new refugees, the *marielitos*, were part of the most intense period of refugee migration from Cuba to the United States. While the article's author, Peter Michelmore, asserted that the vast majority of refugees from Cuba were "honest and hard-working," the piece started with a graphic description of the murder of 19 year old Claribel Benitez, a "well-brought-up Cuban American girl" shot during an attempted carjacking. The mortally injured Benitez gave a description of the strangers who attacked her to the police. "*Marielitos*," the girl whispered, "Three *Marielitos*…" Before her death Benitez repeated the world marielitos several times and "to those who heard her, the word needed no explanation."[2] Michelmore went on to describe how the administration of President Jimmy Carter had been duped by Fidel Castro, who "set among an open society a vicious new criminal

[1] Peter Michelmore, "From Cuba with Hate," *Reader's Digest*, December 1982, 222.
[2] Michelmore, "From Cuba with Hate," 223.

force." What Castro had unleashed upon the United States was an "outlaw invasion" that had not "been recognized, or confronted nationally."[3]

The *Reader's Digest* article was simply the latest indication of the significant blow to the Cuban community's prestige in the United States following the Mariel boatlift. Just three months before, during a visit to Miami, the State Department's coordination of refugee affairs, H. Eugene Douglas, said of Cubans that "of all nationalities, they are ranked at the bottom."[4] The *Miami Herald's* editorial section ran a piece on the negative press the refugees of the Mariel boatlift were receiving across the country and described how, "like a festering sore, the black legend of Mariel continues to spread across the United States."[5] It was not surprising, then, that when news of the *Reader's Digest* article broke in Miami, many Cubans reacted with anger. Eloy Gonzalez, secretary of the Latin Chamber of Commerce, described the article as "an abuse and an exaggeration." Michelmore defended himself by claiming that the article made it clear he was writing about a small group among the refugees, but others were concerned about the overall effect. "People will draw an image of all Cubans from this description," said Lucrecia Granda, Secretary of the Spanish American League Against Discrimination.[6]

Not all Cuban Americans had this reaction to the article. *Herald* columnist Roberto Fabricio found that the reaction of many leaders in the Cuban American community to the piece had been unjustified because they had not read it. While Fabricio had shared the concerns of these leaders about a negative portrayal of part of the community reflecting badly on the whole

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[3] *Ibid*, 224.
[4] Fabiola Santiago, "Cubans' Image at a Low in U.S., Official Says," *Miami Herald*, August 15, 1982.
[5] Guillermo Martinez, "Mariel Myths Feed Venom Across Nation," Editorial, *Miami Herald*, November 18, 1982.
[6] Ana Veciana-Suarez, "Cubans Blast Reader's Digest Story on Mariel Refugees," *Miami Herald*, November 19, 1982.

community, he found that in the *Reader's Digest* piece Michelmore had just stated the facts. While he believed that the estimate that criminals constituted 20% of the 125,000 refugees who came to the United States during the boatlift was exaggerated, Fabricio stated that Michelmore squarely laid the blame of the crime wave on Castro and the criminals themselves and should thus be applauded by the Cuban American community.[7] Honest Cubans should not be concerned with the portrayal of those Cubans who broke the law and who had been sent to the United States by Fidel Castro to sully the larger community.

The Mariel boatlift was an important opportunity for escape for thousands of Cubans who were disaffected with the Castro regime and for Cuban Americans who desperately wanted to be reunited with friends and family still on the island. Conditions in revolutionary Cuba caused severe discontent among a significant sector of the country's population. Faced with an image crisis on an international scale, Castro established conditions for the boatlift and played on the discontent of his own population and the desires of the Cuban exiles in the United States. This, in turn, presented a significant challenge to the federal government, to local authorities, to many Miami residents, and to the image of Cuban Americans in the United States. The reactions of the Carter administration, black and white Miamians, and the Cuban American community to the boatlift and to the new refugees only widened the already existing divisions in the city. Throughout the tumultuous year 1980 and the two years that followed, these reactions focused influence that the Cuban American community had been accruing for decades and created a powerful political lobby that sought to control the community's image and to influence American foreign policy towards Cuba.

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[7] Roberto Fabricio, "Reader's Digest Mariel Article Well Reasoned," *Miami Herald*, November 20, 1982.

On April 1, 1980 a bus crashed through the gates of the Peruvian embassy in Havana.[8] The institution of a more liberal policy by the Peruvian government regarding Cuban asylum seekers at the embassy prompted driver Héctor Sanyustiz and five others to commandeer a bus on the afternoon of the first. As Sanyustiz made a dangerous turn toward the embassy gate, the bus came under fire from the Cuban troops assigned to embassy security. Despite the obstacles and the gunfire, the front third of the bus entered the grounds of the embassy and allowed the asylum seekers to move into sovereign Peruvian territory.[9] This was only the latest in a series of similar incidents. By March 1980, nearly thirty Cubans had crashed vehicles against the gates of the embassies of Peru and Venezuela.[10]

This incident differed from previous incidents because it resulted in a fatality. A twenty-seven year old Cuban guard assigned to the Peruvian embassy was caught in the crossfire when his fellow guards opened fire on Sanyustiz's bus, prompting a stand-off between the guards and the Peruvian embassy staff providing asylum to the group from the bus.[11] This stand-off would become a full diplomatic incident as the Cuban government demanded the return of the asylum seekers and the Peruvian government refused.[12] On April 4, the Cuban government removed its protection from the embassy by removing the compound's gates and the barricades that protected them, as well as the Cuban security guards assigned to the mission. By the following day, 2,000 Cubans had entered the grounds of the embassy after hearing assurances from

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[8] Jo Thomas, "2,000 Who Want to Leave Cuba Crowd Peru's Embassy in Havana," *New York Times*, April 6, 1980.
[9] Mirta Ojito, *Finding Mañana: A Memoir of a Cuban Exodus* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2005), 68-93.
[10] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 55.
[11] Ojito, *Finding Mañana*, 100-101.
[12] Maria de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 105.

Cuban government officials that all but the 25 who had entered the embassy by force would be allowed to leave the island if they were granted visas by foreign nations.[13] By April 6, 2,000 had become 10,800.[14]

Desperate asylum seekers refused to leave the embassy grounds for fear they would be arrested and would not be allowed to return. The embassy staff, completely unequipped and unprepared to provide for this number of people were completely overwhelmed. Cuban security forces provided some food for the asylum seekers, but the nearly 11,000 people on the embassy grounds had to subsist on rations meant for 2,500. Unsanitary conditions due to lack of appropriate bathroom facilities compounded the lack of food and water and resulted in widespread suffering of dehydration, sunstroke, and gastroenteritis. The international press extensively covered the events at the Peruvian embassy, embarrassing Castro's government. In response, the Cuban government went on the offensive against the asylum seekers.[15]

Cuba's state newspaper, *Granma*, referred to the refugees as "delinquents, social deviants, vagrants, and parasites."[16] A new term came into use when discussing the refugees on the embassy grounds: the asylum seekers were *escoria*, society's scum.[17] Those seeking to leave were from class backgrounds that the revolution had sought to help, but government officials explained that even in a socialist society there existed underdeveloped groups of "lumpen proletariat" who undermined the revolution and who sought to leave Cuba for purely economic reasons.[18] The Cuban government's propaganda push even included claims that there had been

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[13] Jo Thomas, "2,000 Who Want to Leave Cuba Crowd Peru's Embassy in Havana," *New York Times*, April 6, 1980.
[14] García, *Havana USA*, 55.
[15] Ojito, *Finding Mañana*, 115-117.
[16] García, *Havana USA*, 56.
[17] Ojito, *Finding Mañana*, 117.
[18] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 109.

a reduction in crime of 55% since the asylum seekers had been residing on the embassy grounds. The start of the crisis had even produced a useful martyr in the form of Pedro Ortíz Cabrera, the guard killed in the crossfire, who became a symbol of the loyal Cuban citizenry who stood in opposition to the escoria so eager to desert the revolution.[19]

The Cuban government came to an agreement with several nations, including the United States and Peru, regarding the fate of the embassy refugees. It was agreed that 3,500 would go to the United States, 3,500 would be dispersed in eight other nations, and the rest would be temporarily taken to Costa Rica to await resettlement to other countries.[20] The plan was implemented on April 16. Flights to Costa Rica drew particular interest from the international press, which was on hand to document the elated reactions of the refugees upon reaching Costa Rican soil. The interviews conducted by international journalists with those Cubans arriving in Costa Rica painted them as ordinary men and women seeking to leave a repressive regime and stood in direct opposition to the Cuban government's description of the asylum seekers as the dregs of society. Castro accused the governments of the United States and Peru of using the Costa Rican way station for propaganda purposes against his regime.[21] To counteract this perceived disadvantage, Castro unilaterally halted the airlift and declared that all flights carrying the refugees would have to go directly to the countries in which they were to settle. Foreign diplomats in Cuba speculated that Castro was attempting to keep international attention not on the exiting refugees, but on the massive March for Solidarity scheduled to take place on April 20 in Havana.[22] This prompted the Costa Rican government to offer asylum to all

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[19] García, *Havana USA*, 56.
[20] Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 180.
[21] García, *Havana USA*, 56.
[22] Associated Press, "Cuba Cancels Staging-Area Exile Flights," *Boston Globe*, April 19, 1980.

the Cubans at the Peruvian embassy and to appeal to the Cuban government to allow the flights to resume.[23] Castro would not yield. He intended to pressure Peru and the United States. In the midst of an election year, the Carter administration rejected this change of policy.[24]

The Cuban government then changed tactics once again, bypassing the American government and announcing to Cubans living abroad that they could use boats to pick up those wanting to exit the country through the port of Mariel on the outskirts of Havana.[25] Cuban Americans, who earlier in the week had been planning on launching a small flotilla with supplies for those trapped at the Peruvian embassy, seized on this opportunity. By April 21, *Granma* announced that a flotilla of some fifty lobster boats had left Florida to begin the transport of those Cubans seeking to leave, with the first two already having arrived at Mariel. *Granma's* editorial announced that the state was not opposed to the boats taking away those who wanted to leave and that they would not be received "with cannon fire because they are coming in peace."[26]

The first two boats returned to Key West with some forty refugees, causing a one State Department official to call the effort "unlawful and unhelpful." Officials were concerned that more Cuban Americans would travel down to Mariel and return with boatloads of new refugees and tried to discourage this.[27] Officials were right to be concerned about the number of Cuban Americans heading to Mariel growing significantly. Within four days of the arrival of the first two boats the *New York Times* described Mariel harbor as "a floating city of more than 1300

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[23] Jo Thomas, "Costa Rica Offers to Accept All 10,000 from Cuba Embassy," *New York Times*, April 21, 1980.
[24] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 180.
[25] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 105.
[26] Associated Press, "Miami Exiles Go to Cuba to Bring Bac Refugees," *Boston Globe*, April 21, 1980.
[27] Janet Battaile, "Cuban Exiles' Boats Pick up 40 Refugees," *New York Times*, April 22, 1980.

boats." Upon arrival the crews were approached by immigration officials seeking identification and lists of relatives the exile boats sought to bring back to the United States. In addition to the family members and friends the exiles sought to bring back to the United States, Cuban authorities also forced each boat to take on additional passengers. The Cuban government then took the opportunity to sell fuel and supplies to the boats. The large number of boats and the exchange of goods led a triumphant Granma to declare that the U.S. blockade was broken. "There is a great demand for Havana Club rum," wrote the Communist Party newspaper, "everyone agrees that the Bacardi they sell in the United States is absolutely worthless."[28] Even as the Cuban government dealt with exiles eager to bring their families to the United States, the state's media proceeded to mock both the U.S. government and militantly anti-Castro members of the exile community like the Bacardi Company's Bosch family. Despite these jabs, exile community's enthusiasm for the boatlift resulted in 6,333 new Cuban arrivals in the United States between April 21 and April 30.[29]

As the exodus began, it was soon joined by more and more individuals and families who had not been a part of the embassy crisis. Heads of household would often apply for permission to leave the country in secret and would keep that decision quiet for fear of being targeted by their neighbors. Even after the decision had been made to leave the country and the families had been registered as having the desire to leave, however, there was no guarantee of an exit. Families could be taken to a staging area in Havana where they would be left to wait for days. The would-be refugees needed to remain attentive to the instructions and calls of the Cuban authorities as those who were called and who did not report after the call were simply left

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[28] Jo Thomas, "Harbor in Cuba A Floating City of 1,300 Boats," *New York Times*, April 27, 1980.
[29] Cuban-Haitian Task Force, "Chronology," Folder Task Force Chronology 5/13/80—9/28/80, Box 28, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA (hereafter cited as Carter Library).

behind. In order to avoid this, Cuban American fashion designer Juan Carlos Piñera recalls that his parents took to sleeping in shifts to avoid the possibility of being left behind while the whole family slumbered.[30]

In the case of eight-year-old Lissette Mendez, it was her mother who chose to leave the island when the opportunity came. Mendez remembered being one of the few Cuban Jews still living in Cuba by 1980. Her father had been absolutely devoted to the revolution, but upon his death her mother had decided to leave the country. Young Lissette was told that they would soon be leaving the country, but that she had to keep this fact a secret. She almost exposed the plan when she began trying to give her toys away to those children who were her friends. When the time for Mendez and her mother to leave their home came, however, secrecy was quickly discarded. Officials arrived and publicly informed them it was time to leave. At that moment, all of Mendez's neighbors gathered to yell and throw refuse at both mother and daughter.[31]

This type of public rejection could easily escalate into violence and led to other traumatic experiences. Volunteers who worked with incoming refugees reported that many of the new arrivals were injured as a result of government encouraged repudiation.[32] When Niza Motola and her family left their house, her neighbors were chanting "*Escoria! Gusano!*" Some resorted to calling her mother a whore and throwing sticks at her family. Motola, also eight at the time, was unsure as to what was happening. Motola's uncle saved the young girl from a member of the crowd who went to physically assault her. Even after reaching the relative safety of the bus that would take them to the harbor, young Niza was further traumatized by the treatment her family received from the Cuban government. The men were separated from the

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[30]Juan Carlos Piñera, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 28.
[31] Lissette Mendez, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 26.
[32] García, *Havana USA*, 63.

women and every single person was strip searched and had their money and jewelry taken away. "Watching my mother be strip-searched was something that has taken me years to be able to talk about," Motola recounted years later.[33]

Those citizens leaving Cuba as part of the boatlift were forced to sign documents confessing to social deviancy and crimes against the state. This created a false record of crimes never committed by the migrants, but which fit the Cuban government's preferred image of the boatlift. In an effort to reinforce this narrative and to rid the country of problematic individuals, the Cuban government added convicted criminals to the general population of the boatlift. After the end of the boatlift it was determined that some 26,000 of the Mariel entrants had criminal records. Of these 26,000, however, only 2,000 had committed serious felonies, while many others were jailed under lesser crimes ascribed to them by Cuba's *ley de peligrosidad* (law of dangerousness).[34] An oral history project undertaken as part of an English instruction program for the new refugees revealled that the crimes for which the refugees had been convicted varied greatly. Some were convicted of purchasing food or clothing on the black market, others for selling items or materials without permission, still others had been political prisoners or had been imprisoned for offenses like vagrancy and fighting. With sentences ranging from thirty-one days to forty years, the *ley de peligrosidad* was particularly useful for incarcerating "practically anybody for any simple misdemeanor in which the person might be considered a public menace."[35]

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[33] Niza Motola, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 27.
[34] García, *Havana USA*, 63-64.
[35] Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit Adult School for Cuban Refugees, "Teaching Oral English to Cuban Refugees Report 4: Cuba: As Told by Cuban Refugees," October 24, 1980, Folder Cuba as Told by Cuban Refugees, Box 35, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.

For some, the inclusion of the prisoners was an added layer to the traumas of leaving Cuba. Niza Motola's recalled that her bus to Mariel was stopped at a prison and loaded up with prisoners on the way to the port.[36] For the prisoners themselves, the opportunity for release was made all the more precious by the conditions in Cuban prisons. Former prisoners described dirty, overcrowded facilities where 125 prisoners could be crammed into a space designed for 25 people. Stories of prisoners sleeping on the floor, not receiving sufficient nutrition, and being abused by their captors were common among the refugees released from Cuban prisons.[37] Some prisoners actively sought the chance to participate in the boatlift, even at the risk of their own lives. Daniel Benítez was serving a sentence at Sandino Prison for food theft when he entered his name in a list of those seeking to be included in the boatlift. When his name was not called for release, Benítez and twelve other inmates began a hunger strike. After 19 days without food, the strikers received a visit from the superintendent and were allowed inclusion into those immigrating to the United States.[38]

In addition to prison inmates, the Cuban government also sought to rid itself of homosexuals in what Historian Julio Capó Jr. has called "a clear episode of the Castro regime's 'institutionally promoted homophobia.'" During a speech at Havana's José Martí Revolution Square on May 1, 1980, Castro furthered his narrative of the Mariel exiles as the *lumpen* of Cuban society and specifically made reference to homosexuals as part of that category, making eference to "limp wrists."[39] Homosexuality had technically been decriminalized in 1979, but the

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[36] Niza Motola, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 27.
[37] Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit Adult School for Cuban Refugees, "Teaching Oral English to Cuban Refugees Report 4: Cuba: As Told by Cuban Refugees," October 24, 1980.
[38] Daniel Benítez, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 22.
[39] Julio Capó Jr., "Queering Mariel: Meditating Cold War Foreign Policy and U.S. Citizenship among Cuba's Homosexual Exile Community, 1978-1994," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29, no. 4 (Summer 2010): 83.

*ley de peligrosidad* left homosexuals vulnerable if they defied the "norms of socialist morality." This often led to arrests based on perceived effeminacy and on congregation with other homosexuals.[40] Cuban homosexuals were encouraged to leave the country, with some sources reporting that incarcerated homosexuals were threatened with the addition of years to their sentence should they resist joining the boatlift.[41]

Some of the refugees who took part in the boatlift also suffered from a variety of conditions including mental illness, chronic illnesses, and mental and physical disabilities. Some 1,500 refugees had mental health problems or intellectual disability, including 500 who needed institutionalization and 500 who were placed in halfway houses in the United States. While exact numbers are not available, estimates put the number of refugees with chronic medical problems including substance abuse, tuberculosis, or cardiovascular disease at 1,600.[42]

These various groups converged on Mariel harbor and found themselves distributed among the boats which had arrived from the United States. Boat captains and the exiles who hired them often waited for several days while immigration officials went over the list of family members they wanted to bring back to the United States. Crews passed the time by eating and drinking. Eager to take advantage of the large demand for supplies, Cuban authorities raised prices on seemingly everything, even ham sandwiches and fresh water. Originally, government boats sold ham sandwiches for a dollar, but they soon increased the cost to three dollars and then to five. A gallon of fresh water cost three to five dollars and the bottles of Havana Club that *Granma* had boasted about had a going rate of $85.[43] One captain, Mike Howell, had a

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[40] Capó, "Queering Mariel," 86-87.
[41] *Ibid*, 88.
[42] García, *Havana USA*, 64.
[43] Ojito, *Finding Mañana*, 204-205.

confrontation with immigration officials when he asked for a tally of refugees on board his boat and received a list of three hundred—rather than the expected twenty-five!—names.[44] Ultimately, Howell left Cuba without the people he had sought to ferry back to the United States but agreed to take on the women, children, and elderly from a stranded ship. He further agreed to tow that ship, filled with what he thought were dangerous looking men, to international waters to get the help of the U.S. Coast Guard.[45]

The passengers and crew of Howell's ship, the *Mañana*, engaged in a dangerous and crowded crossing with the hope of arriving in Key West. They were far from alone in facing the sea voyage with strangers foisted upon them by the Cuban government. Caridad Morales rented a 25-foot boat to sail down to Cuba in an attempt to get her relatives, the Caballero family, back to the United States. For Morales to bring José and Gricel Caballero and their two daughters Elizabeth and Judith back to Florida, however, their small vessel was forced to take on an additional eighteen passengers.[46] Larger vessels were also filled to dangerous levels during the boatlift. One refugee, Tomás Díaz, recalls making the trip on a ship called the *Hill David*. The vessel was only made for 150 people, but Cuban officials loaded 350 refugees into the ship. The waters were rough for the *Hill David's* crossing. The refugees started collecting dark coins and Díaz, an Afro-Cuban, was asked to throw them into the ocean as an offering to Cuba's Patroness, Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre.[47] The overcrowding only compounded the danger as many of the boats rented by the exiles were barely able to get to Cuba, much less return overloaded with refugees. The crossings often ended not with the boats reaching Key West on their own power, but instead having to be brought into shore by the Coast Guard.

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[44] *Ibid*, 208.
[45] *Ibid*, 212-213.
[46] Elizabeth Caballero, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 23.
[47] Tomás Díaz, "Personal Stories," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 23.

For most of the refugees, the boatlift represented the hope for a new life. Others were forced to participate. Regardless of the end result, the trials and tribulations that accompanied the journey to Mariel and the subsequent sea voyage took their toll on most of the would-be migrants. Once they reached the United States, the new refugees would face all the same challenges their predecessors had encountered but without the comprehensive system of aid or the positive reception of the U.S. government or the American people in general. For the Cubans that participated in the boatlift, the label of *marielitos* would not only indicate the circumstances by which they arrived in the United States, but it would carry negative associations that would follow them as a stigma for years to come.

Despite new legislation meant to streamline the admittance processes for refugees, the Mariel boatlift presented a major policy challenge to the Carter administration. Earlier in the year, the president had signed the Refugee Act of 1980 into law. The Refugee Act was the product of almost two years of work and negotiation between members of Congress, the INS, the Departments of Health Education and Welfare, State, and Justice, and the White House. It redefined "refugee" as a victim of "persecution, or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion," without linking the persecution to a particular geographical region or political ideology.[48] The Act also authorized the admission of fifty thousand refugees a year who could, after one year, with INS oversight gain permanent resident status. This number could be adjusted through Congressional consultation and approval in case of a large scale emergency

[48] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 173.

situation.[49] Despite being designed for an emergency situation in which the United States would be the country of first asylum for large numbers of refugees, the legislative structures of the Refugee Act of 1980 could only serve as far as they were put into use by the Carter Administration.

On May 3, President Carter told the League of Women Voters in Philadelphia that the Cuban refugees would be welcomed with "an open heart and open arms."[50] The White House's National Security team was less effusive. It was concerned about the crisis not only because of the volume of refugees, but also because it saw it as falling outside the scope of the Refugee Act and existing international conventions. It also set a dangerous precedent. Unlike other refugee situations, the Mariel boatlift involved "a country, i.e. Cuba, expelling its people to the United States." Although the travel by exile Cubans to Mariel to bring back relatives and other refugees to the United States was in violation of U.S. immigration laws, the federal government found itself in a dilemma. It could not stop American boats from picking up and depositing Cubans on U.S. shores. "Our national conscience rebels at the thought of turning these people away," wrote White House aide Robert Pastor, while also mentioning the commitment made by President Carter in Philadelphia. Despite the moral certitude in admitting those refugees who were fleeing Castro's government, Pastor worried that many among the boatlift Cubans were "hardened criminals" and that allowing the Cuban government-mandated boatlift in direct violation of U.S. immigration statutes would serve as an invitation to other countries to "replicate Castro's strategy." Pastor suggested several strategies to put pressure on Cuba's government and create a normalized flow of refugees for the years that followed. The U.S. Congress could, for example, increase the number of Cuban refugees allowed in the United

[49] *Ibid*, 177.
[50] Cuban-Haitian Task Force, "Chronology."

States for the year 1980 from 19,500 to 75,000, and to 50,000 for subsequent years, suggesting that this strategy would further destabilize Castro's revolution.[51]

As a result of these concerns and in an attempt to further foreign policy aims the administration sought to reframe the welcome extended by President Carter to the Cuban refugees "in the context of an orderly flow." As such, it sought to reduce the boat flotilla by convincing the Cuban-American community of the dangers of the unorganized boatlift and of the government's intention to regularize the flow of refugees. This would be combined with what the administration defined as "modest" enforcement of U.S. laws, including fines and citations but few seizures of boats and no attempts to block boats seeking to travel to Cuba. These strategies proved ineffectual as the Cuban American community did not take the U.S. government at its word and the enforcement of the law had led to few fines being levied, with none being collected, and only nine seizures by the second week of May. The flow continued and federal officials estimated that by mid-May approximately 50-55,000 Cubans would have arrived in the United States as part of the boatlift. This was not likely to change as national security officials assumed that the boatlift would continue "as long as Cuban-Americans believe they can return with long-separated family members or until they are assured that an alternative transport system is in place."[52]

The federal government was growing concerned about the increasing evidence of "undesirables" in the boatlift, including "hardened criminals, the mentally ill, the retarded and persons who are diseased." This concern was shared by members of the Cuban American

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[51] Robert Pastor to Zbigniew Brzezinkski, Stu Eizenstat, Frank White, and Jack Watson, May 9, 1980, Folder Cuban Refugees, 5/80, Box 70, Lloyd Cutler Files, Carter Library.
[52] Stu Eizenstat, Jack Watson, and Zbigniew Brzezinkski to President Jimmy Carter, May 13, 1980, Folder Cuban Refugees, 5/80, Box 70, Lloyd Cutler Files, Carter Library. (Underlining in the original.)

community because of the growing backlash among non-Cuban Americans.[53] The head of the Cuban Affairs desk at the State Department, Myles Frechette, described how the administration sought the community's help in stemming the flow of refugees. "It was the first time the U.S. government had reached out to the Cuban-American community," recalled Frechette. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher invited several Cuban American organizations to Washington in an attempt to gain their help in stopping the boatlift. "The meeting," Frechette described, "was just a disaster because each group was pushing its own agenda."[54] Without a decisive leadership, the Cuban American organizations succumbed to in-fighting along well-established fault lines. The administration was put in a difficult position by this outcome. The organizations were unable to provide aid to the federal government as a united front that might have stemmed the tide of the boatlift. Carter, however, was facing re-election at the end of the year and risked the ire of the Cuban American community if he engaged in more restrictive action.

Equally problematic for Carter's political prospects were the accusations that the administration's handling of the boatlift was encouraging illegal immigration. By mid-May, veteran *New York Times* reporter James Reston opened an article by stating that the "United States Government has clearly lost control of its immigration policy." Reston held that the Cuban refugee influx was simply a particularly dramatic example that the United States was unable to protect its borders or enforce laws against illegal immigration at a time of high inflation and unemployment. While previous forms of illegal immigration by Mexicans and other Latin Americans, who made contributions to the U.S. economy, were generally ignored, the Mariel crisis could not simply be overlooked. In Reston's mind, Mariel posed a fundamental

[53] Stu Eizenstat, Jack Watson, and Zbigniew Brzezinkski to President Jimmy Carter, May 13, 1980.
[54] Myles Frechette, "Insider's View," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 19.

question as to whether the federal government had any sort of policy to deal with the problems of immigration into the United States. While he conceded that the human tragedy of the event was obvious, he pointed that out that Fidel Castro had a policy, he was "exporting his failures." Neither the White House nor Congress could say the same. Unrestricted immigration, further, could create a crisis spurred by bilingual education's establishment of "separate but equal" educational systems. The boatlift represented a problem of image at a time in which diplomatic tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were on the rise. Because the United States had not been defending its borders and enforcing its immigration laws, "this latest invasion of the Cubans in the weekend boats has not only hurt but even mocked the authority of the White House." [55] Even when the Carter administration attempted stricter enforcement of laws preventing travel to Cuba, this had little effect. By the time the U.S. Coast Guard established a control net over South Florida's waters, government reports quoted estimates that about 1,000 boats remained in Cuba, ready to return. This delay in establishing control rendered the administration's actions moot to restrictionists as it allowed for as many as 50,000 refugees to arrive to the United States without a single new vessel approaching Cuba.[56]

Carter's political problems with the massive influx of Cubans were compounded by the increasing presence of Haitian "boat" people in South Florida, a phenomenon that had been growing for some time. During the 1970s 55,000 Haitians had immigrated to the United States through legal means. Many of them were attempting to escape the repressive government of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. In addition to the legal immigration by Haitians, some 30,000 others attempted to enter the United States without following regular immigration procedures.

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[55] James Reston, "The Carter Cuban Policy," *New York Times*, May 16, 1980.
[56] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 20, 1980,Folder 61, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

This wave of asylum seekers posed a problem for the U.S. government because, unlike the Cubans, the Haitians were fleeing an allied government. As such, less than one hundred Haitians were granted asylum in the United States throughout the 1970s.[57] Some allies of the Cubans admitted the greater difficulties faced by the Haitians based on the political orientation of the regime they were fleeing. "If Duvalier were a Communist," one county official stated, "the Haitians wouldn't have any problems."[58] Although the amount of Haitians arriving on American coasts were not on par with the numbers of Cubans arriving as part of the Mariel boatlift, or even with the peak Cuban migrations of the 1960s, they represented another significant challenge to policymakers and led to the creation of the Haitian Processing Center in Miami in March of 1980. By the end of the year, federal authorities estimated that 12,000 Haitians had sought asylum in the United States in the previous twelve months.[59] These refugee influxes became two sides of the same coin in the eyes of the federal government and became linked in its bureaucracy with the establishment of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force as the coordinating entity for dealing with the refugees.

The political problems for the Carter administration and for the refugees were only made worse by the public image that the new exodus was assuming. Where previous waves of Cuban refugees received a warm welcome from the national media, often driven by the work of the public relations officials of the Cuban Refugee Program, the marielitos received a very different reception. Early on, media outlets like the *Chicago Tribune* encouraged the arrival of the refugees embracing the types of narratives that older exiles had encountered during the 1960s. "So give us your bums, Fidel," wrote the *Tribune's* editor in late April, "send them

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[57] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 180.
[58] Anthony Ramirez, "In a Strained Miami, Cubans and Haitians Help the Boat People," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1980.
[59] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 180.

throughout the hemisphere and the world. They certainly make better exports than your revolution."[60] Editorials in newspapers throughout the United States, including the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*, urged the federal government to provide the refugees with humanitarian assistance.[61] This trend did not last.

On May 11, 1980 the *New York Times* ran an article on the boatlift entitled "Retarded People and Criminals Are Included in Cuban Exodus." The article's author, Edward Schumacher, reported that out of 30,000 refugees some 9,000 were friends and family of Cuban Americans, and the rest came from among the 10,000 Peruvian embassy refugees and from those whom the Cuban government called scum. In fact, the piece claimed, Cuban soldiers were loading refugees onto vessels in Mariel harbor "in a major effort, discussed openly by Cuban officials, to rid the country of criminals, mentally retarded people, delinquents and others the Government calls 'scum' by sending them to the United States." Schumacher reported on a group of four "apparently retarded" people huddling on a ship called the *Valley Chief*. One young man in the group was asked if he came from prison or a mental institution and responded by mumbling "embajada," embassy, but he was unable to produce the safe-conduct pass provided to and tenaciously held on to by Peruvian embassy asylum seekers.[62]

On the pier, the reporter came into contact with a group of prisoners and ex-convicts who had been instructed by Cuban authorities to state they were from the embassy so they could avoid detention upon arriving on American shores. One of them, thirty-year-old Pedro Palmeri, had been imprisoned for six years for the theft of a government owned vehicle he

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[60] "Send us your bums, Fidel," editorial, *Chicago Tribune*, April 20, 1980.
[61] García, *Havana USA*, 65.
[62] Edward Schumacher, "Retarded People and Criminals Are Included in Cuban Exodus," *New York Times*, May 11, 1980.

claimed he only lent to friends. After being arrested again for fighting with a police officer, he was offered the chance to leave Cuba for the United States. Palmeri claimed he was not given much of a choice. "I knew they would make it hard for me if I didn't go," he explained, "It was an easy choice to make anyway. This whole country is a prison." Schumacher acknowledged that the some of those who had been imprisoned had been detained for crimes more political than common. Some Cuban-Americans defended the criminals and ex-convicts because of political convictions and often those who had committed petty crimes. Food rationing by the Cuban government, they argued, had forced many of the convicts to steal to feed themselves and their families. Other Cuban Americans were not as forgiving, fearing that there would be political and social repercussions in the United States. The piece quoted Antonio Aguacio, a New Jersey longshoreman who told Schumacher that the U.S. government should "screen out the misfits and send them back."[63]

This prompted some Cuban Americans to take it upon themselves to combat this stereotype. When she read a piece in the *U.S. News & World Report* that expressed concerns over the impact that the boatlift would have on an ailing American economy, Olga Vives of Mt. Prospect, Illinois felt she needed to respond. Vives wrote a letter to the publication's editor and invoked the history of the United States of offering refuge "to the oppressed, the sick and the poor." She argued that the country had a moral obligation to come to the aid of the Mariel refugees. She recounted how her own family had arrived in the United States in 1961, "penniless and destitute, emotionally shattered over the loss of our country," and how they had been given a chance to rebuild their lives. Why could the United States not give the same welcome to these new refugees from Cuba? The Mariel Cubans, she argued, were fleeing

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[63] *Ibid*.

oppression; trying to survive. "Has the nation gotten smaller," Vives asked, "or have the hearts of the American people become less accommodating?"[64] These negative perceptions persisted as efforts by Cuban Americans like Vives were drowned out by the increasingly negative perceptions in the media and among members of the Cuban community in the United States.

Some remember this as a victory for Fidel Castro. Cuban American lawyer Rafael Peñalver considered this a public relations coup for the Cuban regime. "What Castro achieved was that the world, instead of talking about the desperation of the Cuban people to leave Cuba," Peñalver argued, "was talking about the criminals who had arrived through the Mariel boatlift." The crimes of the felons included in the boatlift by Cuban authorities had the effect of staining the image of the overwhelming majority of the boatlift Cubans, who were "seeking liberty, decent people, working people."[65] The actual number of hardcore criminals among the Mariel refugees received a disproportionate amount of attention when compared to the total numbers of the migration. While the hardcore felons "constituted less than 4 percent of the total number of entrants, they commanded almost all of the media attention."[66]

Aside from the presence of prisoners, homosexuals, and the mentally ill, the social characteristics of the vast majority of the refugees who arrived in the United States as part of the Mariel boatlift were different from those of the refugees who arrived in earlier waves. There was a significant number of Afro Cubans participating in the boatlift, larger than in any previous wave. Although there were a number of artist and intellectuals who also fled Cuba at this time, these refugees were largely male and working class. U.S. census data shows that

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[64] Olga E. Vives to editor *U.S. News & World Report*, May 6, 1980, Folder Mariel Boatlift—Clippings, Vertical File, CHC.
[65] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[66] García, *Havana USA*, 65.

about 25% of the early Cuban immigrants had a college education, compared to 7% of the Mariel Cubans. Nearly 70% of the marielitos were blue-collar workers. Some scholars have suggested that many of those who sought to travel to the United States as part of the boatlift were disenfranchised by the lack of opportunity for advancement in Cuba, both politically and economically. Older generations of Cubans, those who had built the revolution, retained high posts in the country while the young were often forced to bear the brunt of Castro's military adventures in Africa and Latin America. "Moreover, in the years prior to *el Mariel*, Cubans lived through some of the leanest years of the revolution," writes sociologist Silvia Pedraza, "housing shortages were severe; food was insufficient and controlled by *la libreta*, the strict ration book; unemployment and underemployment were chronic; and a vast black market developed in which most participated."[67] Unlike the extensive professional and business experience represented by the refugees of earlier migration waves, the skillsets and experiences brought by the marielitos did not present a potential economic asset for the United States.

The federal response to the refugees, in terms of material advantages provided, was also significantly different from that received by the earlier waves of refugees, in large part caused by the massive and disorganized form of the migration. By the time that the federal government took any real notice of Florida's refugee problem in 1960, the migration had been ongoing for nearly two years and the problem had become so massive as to have the Red Cross rebuff Tracy Voorhees's suggestions that the organization take the lead in deal with the crisis in Miami. The original crisis became a chronic problem that needed to be handled by welfare state structures acting on behalf of the interests of the national security state. The sudden appearance of thousands of refugees on American soil in a matter of days presented an

[67] Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 152-153.

immediate challenge and proceeded at a rate that dwarfed any previous period of Cuban exile migration. The response to the boatlift was immediate, but as multiple, competing layers of federal bureaucracy sought to respond to the crisis and the policymakers navigated the dangers posed by the boatlift to their political prospects, the single-mindedness and purpose of the response in the early 1960s was absent from that of the Carter Administration. Critics and observers equated this aimlessness with confusion and a lack of leadership. "President Jimmy Carter was totally unprepared for it," Myles Frechette remarked on the twenty fifth anniversary of the boatlift, "and I don't think anyone is going to give him high marks for the way he handled it."[68]

From the early days of the Mariel migration, various federal agencies found themselves at odds as to how to best deal with the influx and how to best work in concert. In late April, officials from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and from other government agencies responding to the arrival of the marielitos were surprised when the Federal Emergency Management Agency unveiled plans to open a processing center for the Cuban entrants. They were surprised not only because they had to learn about this through a press conference held by FEMA coordinator Tom Casey, but because they had had a meeting with Casey just one hour before the conference.[69] Regardless of these communication errors among federal agencies, FEMA took over operations at the facility in Key West that had been receiving the Mariel entrants since the start of the refugee flow and the HEW operation at the county fairgrounds in Tamiami Park, west of Miami proper. It also designated Eglin Air Force base, located in the Florida panhandle as a processing center for up to 5,000 refugees and prepared to close down

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[68] Myles Frechette, "Insider's View," *Mariel: 25 Years Later*, April 3, 2005, 19.
[69] George Putnam to Roger Winter, Mary Spillane, and Denis Gallagher, May 1, 1980, Folder 61, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

the Tamiami operation in favor of a new facility on the closed Opa Locka Naval Air Station, long proposed as a destination for Cuban immigrants by Dade County citizens and officials.[70]

On some levels, the problems and their responses were very similar to the issues faced two decades before, simply on a scale so large that the federal response could only handle immediate necessities instead of longer term outcomes. The need for military bases and large scale processing centers came from familiar problems related to the Cuban exile. By May 2, federal officials reported that housing had already become a significant problem in the Miami area. "Most available housing has been utilized and we are beginning to hear stories of people being temporarily housed in converted dog kennels, etc.," wrote Miami's HEW coordinator George Putnam. The problem, he went on, would only get worse as the refugee flow was expected to continue.[71] Hospitalization costs and medical supplies for the refugees had to be dealt with as officials needed to provide medical aid to incoming emergency cases and those afflicted by tuberculosis and mental health issues. This led to a temporary arrangement by which Florida's state government covered the refugees' medical costs and were then reimbursed by federal authorities.[72] Officials were forced to first contend with the most basic needs of the refugees before they could even consider the effects that the influx would have on Miami.

The federal government's ability to meet the needs of the refugees had also changed in the two decades since the original refugee crisis. The Cuban Refugee Program had, for all intents and purposes, ceased to exist at the end of the previous decade. Some among the

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[70] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 2, 1980, Folder 61, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[71] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 2, 1980.
[72] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 5, 1980, Folder 61, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

Cuban American community who worked in cooperation with the federal government sought to have the CRP refunded and restarted to deal with the Mariel entrants, particularly as the populations in the processing centers swelled. Members of the Junta Patriotica Cubana, including Manuel A. Varona, argued that a reinstated Cuban Refugee Program would be cheaper for the federal government in the long run than the response they had witnessed thus far. Drawing parallels between the boatlift and the arrival of the earlier waves of refugees in the early 1960s, the Junta declared that "only a special program of exception such as the previously used Cuban Refugee Program, can do the job."[73] The ubiquity and the effectiveness of the CRP in the larger refugee experience were still present in the minds of the more established Cuban Americans. If it worked two decades before, surely it could work again.

The federal government, however, was not in a position to recreate the massive federal expenditures of the original CRP and to multiply them by the much larger numbers of refugees arriving on American shores each day. Officials in charge of the emergency response to the crisis often had to deal with problems stemming from the economic recession that the country found itself in and the decreasing prominence of welfare state funding aimed at helping impoverished populations. When the Department of Agriculture decided in early May that Cubans would be eligible for food stamps if they registered for work, officials were concerned that a "crisis in funding for the food stamp program has to be resolved (for anyone Cuban or non-Cuban) to receive food stamps in June and beyond."[74] The Cuban Refugee Program had been a foreign policy initiative couched in terms of and developed within the context of a robust

[73] Manuel A. Varona, Juan Perez-Franco, and Ricardo Aparicio to Victor Palmieri and Chris Holmes, September 8, 1980, Folder Camp Consolidation [2], Box 1, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.
[74] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 6, 1980, Folder 61, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

welfare state. That state still existed, but its priorities had shifted to different sectors of society and in combination with a weak economy it resulted in a response to the refugee flow that was far more in line with traditional avenues of refugee management. Instead of an open door policy with a voluntary registration element for those refugees seeking aid, the 1980 response was characterized by universal registration and the opening of new processing centers and refugee holding facilities in Miami's Orange Bowl and military bases such as Fort Chafee, Arkansas and Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.[75]

While the federal response to the refugee wave ran smoothly by providing basic amenities and health services to the marielitos, there were problems that arose from this massive effort. Attempts to transport, process, house, and treat such significant numbers of people sometimes led to health hazards, accidents, or violence. There was a significant outbreak of diarrhea and vomiting in the Orange Bowl holding center that authorities suspected might have resulted either from food contamination at the Key West facility or from a "change in the water system."[76] Two refugees suffering from leprosy were scheduled to be transferred from Key West to a hospital in Louisiana to be treated, but instead were mistakenly sent elsewhere and had to be tracked down by federal authorities who ultimately found them at the Opa Locka facility.[77]

Refugees who suffered from mental illness or intellectual disabilities were particularly vulnerable to systemic problems stemming from public health and immigration structures that

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[75] See George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 12, 1980 and George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 7, 1980, Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC. See also, George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 19, 1980,Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[76] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 19, 1980.
[77] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 18, 1980,Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

were not prepared to deal with them. Refugees with mental health problems who were in need of long term institutionalization became a concern of Health, Education, and Welfare officials because their needs were simply not being met. These individuals were being "passed back and forth between holding areas and the local psychiatric clinics and hospitals." This posed logistical problems for refugee transportation, but it also posed a danger of their medical care "falling between the cracks."[78] This system of part time care led to at least one refugee injury. On Saturday, May 17th three refugees, two women and one man, were transported to a Miami clinic to be treated for mental health issues.[79] That evening, the three refugees were standing outside the clinic awaiting evaluation. It was then that the male refugee began brandishing a knife he had somehow obtained and was thereafter shot by a police officer. The refugee was wounded and admitted into the hospital for treatment.[80] The report did not list the patient's motivations or medical history, but the fact that he managed to obtain a knife at a federal holding facility, a hospital, or in transit indicates that concerns over refugees "falling through the cracks" were well founded.

Despite these difficulties and the increasingly negative image of the marielitos in the national media, there were some people both in Miami and outside of Miami, Cuban and non-Cuban who welcomed the refugees and sought to lend them and the federal government a hand. New York City Mayor Edward Koch contacted FEMA and offered between 300-400 city apartments for Mariel Cubans, to be sponsored by the city's Cuban community.[81] Voluntary

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[78] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 17, 1980,Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[79] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 18, 1980 (8:15 am),Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[80] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 18, 1980 (1:15 pm),Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[81] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 20, 1980.

agencies like the Church World Service once again provided their services in the resettlement of Cuban refugees. They helped match refugees with offers of sponsorship, even in the case of "problematic" or "undesirable" refugees. CWS served as the intermediary by which gay organizations like the Metropolitan Community Church, for example, could identify sponsors and work towards resettling gay Cubans without willing sponsors.[82] The federal government also received the help of another veteran of the Cuban refugee effort of the 1960s as Monsignor Bryan Walsh and Miami's Catholic Charities aided immigration authorities in ensuring the wellbeing of unaccompanied minors among the marielitos. Walsh helped provide bilingual social workers to manage the young refugees.[83] Officials even theorized that a South Florida facility for the foster home placement of unaccompanied minors could be established under Walsh's supervision.[84]

Those who were most welcoming of the marielitos were those established Cuban Americans who sought to be reunited with friends or family, or who suddenly and surprisingly found themselves reunited with those they thought long lost. Miami police officer Pablo Camacho migrated to the United States at age twelve, twenty years prior to the boatlift, leaving behind the grandmother who helped raise him and other family members. By 1980, Camacho was a police officer assigned to Little Havana and his origins and experiences made him a natural candidate for an assignment dealing with the Mariel refugees at the Orange Bowl. Authorities wanted order kept within the temporary holding center, but they also sought to prevent incidents triggered by eager Cuban Americans who came to the Orange Bowl hoping to catch a

[82] Barbara Lawson to Christian R. Holmes, September 26, 1980, Folder Camp Consolidation [2], Box 1, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.
[83] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 20, 1980.
[84] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 21, 1980,Folder 62, Box 21, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

glimpse of someone they knew. Camacho was tasked with keeping the refugees from spilling over the chain-link fence once they spotted long lost relatives. In that capacity he witnessed firsthand the emotional intensity of those moments of reunion. "I saw six-foot tall men crying over finding relatives," Camacho told a *Miami Herald* reporter, "Some were bleeding from the hands from trying to reach over the fence."[85] What was for the refugees and their relatives an emotional, even sublime, moment soon became a matter of routine for officers like Camacho who could appreciate the emotion of the moment but who had a responsibility to maintain order and prevent injuries.

It was in the middle of one such routine task that the impact of the boatlift hit Camacho. He boarded a bus to give a group of arriving refuges the same statement of welcome he had given to dozens of other groups before them when an old woman stood up and burst into tears. Clara Camacho Valmana had not seen her grandson Pablo in the twenty years since she had sent him to the United States. In the intervening years she had seen her husband, her son, her daughter-in-law, her grandsons, and other relatives leave the island. She had kept up with her family's lives from afar, and even learned of her husband's death from a radio announcement on Miami's WQBA. Pablo Camacho had given his grandmother's name to friends in the Cuban American community in hopes that his grandmother and his aunt, his last relatives still on the island, might find a way to join the rest of the family in Miami. Despite Camacho's hopes, he could not know that Clara had managed to make her way to Miami aboard a ship called the *Georgia Cracker*. She had lost Pablo's telephone number when she was searched by Cuban soldiers at Mariel. Unsure of how to find her grandson, Clara was unexpectedly and tearfully

[85] Ellen Hampton, "Cop Finds Special Passenger," *Miami Herald*, May 17, 1980.

reunited with Pablo when he welcomed her bus to the holding center, causing jubilation inside the bus.[86]

The hope for family reunification and for the chance to embarrass Castro's government by supporting those escaping revolutionary Cuba drove an outpouring of generosity and aid from many in Miami's Cuban American community. Spanish-language radio stations in the area broadcast appeals for aid which resulted in large amounts of food, clothing, and funds being donated. Many Cuban doctors volunteered their services in order to provide free medical care to the refugees. The Cuban exile owner of the Everglades Hotel, Juvenal Pina, temporarily allotted 350 rooms in his hotel to house 450 refugees and charged severely reduced rates or nothing at all.[87] A telethon on Spanish-language television raised $2,000,000 for the marielitos.[88] While there were some divisions within the community on how to best respond to the boatlift and to the presence in the city of the new refugees, Miami's Cubans provided significant private aid to the refugees in an effort to supplement a federal response that seemed anemic compared to that of decades past.

Despite the fact that the response from the federal government towards the marielitos was different from that received by the exiles of the 1960s and early 1970s, their treatment from the federal government was seen as markedly better than that afforded to the Haitian refugees. A coalition of Haitian advocates, including religious groups and minority Democratic politicians, had been attempting to get better treatment for the refugees for years before the boatlift, but Mariel "presented them an opportunity to point out the hypocrisy of American

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[86] *Ibid*.
[87] Anthony Ramirez, "In a Strained Miami, Cubans and Haitians Help the Boat People," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1980.
[88] Anthony Ramirez, "Making It: Miami Cubans Prosper by Sticking Together, Aiding Later Refugees," *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1980.

refugee policy."[89] Unlike the refugees coming from Cuba, when questioned, most Haitian refugees denied that they were fleeing political repression by the Duvalier government. There was a widespread belief among the refugees that if they sought political asylum and were deported back to Haiti they would be imprisoned or killed. Because of these assertions and because the federal government was hesitant to provide asylum to people fleeing an allied state, immigration officials deemed the refugees economic rather than political casualties. Haitian refugees were thus ineligible for work permits, government aid, and other benefits. This lack of benefits was compounded by the fact that the established Haitian community in Miami was smaller, 30,000 compared to 400,000, and less affluent than the city's Cuban community. "Haitians can only envy the political and economic influence of the Cubans, who have been generally credited with reviving Miami's economy," declared the *Wall Street Journal*. Even as the Haitians lacked the political clout of the Cuban Americans, they sought to have the legal status of the refugees amended in federal court.[90] When U.S. District Court Judge James King came to a decision in the summer of 1980, he declared that the INS "had looked only to deport the Haitians rather than considering the facts of each application, committing 'a wholesale violation of due process.'"[91]

Haitian advocates and leaders often showed frustration, mistrust, or anger when dealing with the federal government, particularly the Cuban Haitian Task Force. When officials from the Task Force spoke to Father Jean Juste of the Haitian Refugee Center, a small operation in Little Haiti that provided information to refugees about their legal rights and immigration procedures, they explained that he did not "vent any anger" toward the organization. Juste did note, that he

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[89] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 182.
[90] Anthony Ramirez, "In a Strained Miami, Cubans and Haitians Help the Boat People," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1980.
[91] Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate*, 182.

had not received any financial support from the federal government. Haitians had a difficult time gaining access to the halls of power where decisions about their destinies were debated and resolved. If they were there, they were "usually mopping the floors rather than making decisions."[92] Despite these feelings of his community being marginalized, Juste was open to more dialogue with members of the Task Force.

These same officials were greeted with more distrust when they met with Rulx Jean Barte. Jean Barte, described as a "very frank and outspoken young Haitian," was the director of the Haitian American Community of Dade County. The HACAD provided primary health care, assistance with employment, translation, emergency aid, education and referral services to the Haitian community. The organization had been forced to cut back on some of its programs due to lack of funding. Jean Barte was described as being "highly suspicious of the intentions of the Cuban Haitian Task Force and of the 'real' purpose or rationale for attempting to establish or re-establish communication with the Haitian community." The Task Force had a history with the Haitian community that fueled Jean Barte's suspicions. The CHTF only contacted Haitian agencies when they had a problem they could not solve or there was a crisis. The Task Force, further, did not consult the community when reaching decisions regarding the handling of Haitian refugees, nor did it keep the community apprised of those decisions once they had been reached. Like Juste, Jean Barte pointed out that the lack of Haitian staff within the Task Force at the decision-making level. He charged that there was a "racist and discriminatory attitude" that kept Haitians from being included in the management of the crisis and kept all the high ranking positions within the Task Force staffed by Americans or Cubans. It was his desire to see Haitians receive equal and fair treatment in regards to the Cuban population, but he placed little trust or

[92] Susan Buchanan to Silvia Gonzalez, January 10, 1981, Folder 36, Box 20, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

faith in the Task Force. Officials described Jean Barte as "very tough and direct," and suggested that with "concrete assistance rather than promises" he could be persuaded of the Task Force's sincerity in its concern for Haitian refugees. "He will be watching what we do rather than what we say," they stated.[93]

It was not only Haitian leaders who were critical of the administration's perceived favoritism. Members of the African American community in South Florida, and throughout the country saw uneven treatment and often agreed with the assessment of many Haitian refugees that racial motivations drove these inequalities. Established African American leaders, despite showing displeasure, were more open to communication and cooperation with the federal government. After a meeting with black community leaders, representatives from the private sector, and elected officials with President Carter, William R. Perry Jr., president of the Greater Miami Branch of the NAACP, conceded positive changes in regards to the refugees. "It was very rewarding to note his move towards assuring justice in the treatment of Haitian refugees," Perry noted, "especially in comparison to the treatment granted Cuban refugees."[94] The city's African Americans were no strangers to frustrations related to Cuban refugees and Cuban Americans, particularly in relation to city, state, and federal authorities. By the time of Mariel, the inequalities that had helped feed the discontent and the 1968 Liberty City riots had become structural and ingrained in the way the city functioned and in its race relations. In 1980, the median family income for an African American family in greater Miami was $11,356. The median income for Hispanics was $14,491 and $16,616 for non-Hispanic white Miamians. This

[93] Susan Buchanan and Jay LaRoche to Silvia Gonzalez, January 11, 1981, Folder 36, Box 20, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.
[94] William R. Perry Jr. to Ray N. Goode, June 11, 1980, Folder—Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce [1], Box 373, Subject Files, Jack Watson's O-A, Cabinet Secretary & Intergovernmental Affairs, Staff Office, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.

led to significant disparities in the poverty rates in the city. The rate of African Americans living under the poverty level was 26.4% in 1979, compared to 14.8% for Hispanics and 8.6% for non-Hispanic whites.[95]

The influx of Cuban refugees and other groups from Latin America and the Caribbean, combined with highway construction which had displaced a significant number of families from traditionally African American Overtown, had also created an oversaturated housing situation in Liberty City and Brownsville. The population of these two communities had risen rapidly from 48,024 in 1960 to 76,064 by the 1970s.[96] A report provided to the federal government in late May of 1980 by Florida International University Professor Marvin Dunn and his research assistant Andrea Loring revealed that members the black community in these areas were also automatically assigned higher risk categories regarding the procurement of business, home, and automobile insurance. Dunn and Loring explained that the prevalence of this practice, redlining, had been established through an investigation of by the office of the Florida State Insurance Commissioner. The report also described how low income residents rarely qualified for lines of credit with banks and had to deal with individual businesses that would lend them money at very high rates. The economic boom in the city of Miami had also affected low income citizens. As large commercial interests expanded toward low income areas, owners were often forced to sell and renters were often forced to move as these lower income areas became gentrified.[97]

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[95] Daryl B. Harris, *The Logic of Black Urban Rebellions: Challenging the Dynamics of White Domination in Miami* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1999), 63.
[96] Harris, *The Logic of Black Urban Rebellions*, 66.
[97] Marvin Dunn and Andrea Loring, "Consumer Issues in Riot Areas of Miami: A Preliminary Report to the White House," May 24, 1980, Folder—Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce [2], Box 373, Subject Files, Jack Watson's O-A, Cabinet Secretary & Intergovernmental Affairs, Staff Office, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.

To make matters worse, the heavy investment from Latin America rarely made its way into African American areas. "You can look at the skyline and see cranes everywhere except over the black community," said Miami city attorney George Knox, one of a few African American officials in the city.[98] An official in the Department of Housing and Urban Development clarified that differences like the influx of Latin American money and the presence of the increasingly strong Hispanic community in the city did not prevent a "striking similarity" to other cities in that the African American community was in last place in the economic mainstream. The only difference was that it lagged behind both the Hispanic and white communities. "The problem is compounded with some 35,000+ newly arrived Cuban and 30,000+ Haitian refugees competing for already scarce public resources," the report went on, noting also that frustrations arose from "the perceived quickness with which some Cuban refugees are able to enter the healthy economic mainstream."[99] African Americans frustrations with the rapid rise of the Cubans became particularly sharp when some local employers began requiring job applicants be bilingual at a time in which the rate of black unemployment was three to four times that of the overall area and where black youth unemployment varied between 45-85% depending on the season.[100] This continued a pattern of economic disenfranchisement and of stagnation in the growth of political power in favor of new immigrants that had become integrated into life in Miami.

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[98] Susan Harrigan and Charles W. Stevens, "Roots of a Riot," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 1980.
[99] Cheryl F. Wright to Frank Jones, June 4, 1980, Folder—Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce [2], Box 373, Subject Files, Jack Watson's O-A, Cabinet Secretary & Intergovernmental Affairs, Staff Office, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.
[100] Ernest G. Green and Lamond Godwin to Frank N. Jones, June 6, 1980, Folder—Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce [2], Box 373, Subject Files, Jack Watson's O-A, Cabinet Secretary & Intergovernmental Affairs, Staff Office, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.

A study conducted in late 1978 found that nearly two thirds of African Americans in Miami agreed with a survey question that read "Cubans get better treatment than Black people in this country." Over 70% of African American respondents to the study agreed that "Cubans in Miami have taken over most of the jobs in the tourist industry that used to be reserved for Blacks." Responses to these statements by other groups in the city illustrated different perspectives on the realities of living in Miami. Hispanic respondents overwhelmingly disagreed with both statements. White respondents largely agreed with the first statement, and either had "no opinion" or agreed with the second. The study called for more study of these tensions, but the results were found to "clearly substantiate the view that Blacks in large numbers feel alienated, exploited and discriminated against, while Whites and Latins essentially dismiss the validity of those feelings."[101] The competition for social and political power and economic advancement in Miami had led to a deep polarization that kept adding to the pressures in the city's race relations.

Tensions between the African American community and other groups in the area became explosive after the resolution of the Arthur McDuffie case. On December 16, 1979, McDuffie, an African American insurance executive, was pursued through the streets of the greater Miami area by at least a dozen police cars following an alleged traffic violation on his motorcycle. At the end of the pursuit, McDuffie was viciously beaten by up to a dozen police officers wielding heavy flashlights. The beating left McDuffie with an open head injury that killed him four days later. While the officers attempted to make it appear as though McDuffie had been injured after losing control of his motorcycle, the physical evidence disproved this claim. At the trial of the five officers charged with his death, Dade County's chief medical

[101] Marvin Dunn and Andrea Loring, "Consumer Issues in Riot Areas of Miami: A Preliminary Report to the White House," May 24, 1980.

examiner, Dr. Ronald Wright, testified that McDuffie's wounds were consistent with someone who fell down a four story building and landed head first onto concrete. He also stated that McDuffie's brain damage was the most severe he had seen in the course of the 3,600 autopsies he had participated in or observed throughout his career. Two officers were given immunity and along with other witnesses testified that McDuffie had been beaten. The seven week trial of the officers accused of McDuffie's death concluded on Saturday, May 17, 1980 when an all-white jury who exonerated the five defendants of all charges after only three hours of deliberations.[102] News of the acquittal spread fast and resulted in the start of several days of rioting that resulted in ten deaths by the end of the first night.[103]

While the rioting was sparked by the McDuffie acquittals, the discontent that led to the riots came from longstanding grievances. At the end of the year, the *Miami Herald* explained that the riots occurred not only because of McDuffie's death and the acquittal of the police officers in his case, but because, "in the 12 years since Miami's first black riots in 1968, the fundamental causes of blacks' seething discontent had barely been addressed, much less corrected."[104] These fundamental causes were often linked to the Cuban presence in Miami by rioters and other observers. There was, in fact, a direct connection between the Cuban presence in Miami and the McDuffie case as one of the policemen acquitted by the jury was a Cuban American. News reports indicated that some African Americans had bitterly commented that Cubans had "become so assimilated into American society that they now were joining whites in brutalizing blacks."[105] To many of Miami's African Americans, the presence of Miami's

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[102] Harris, *The Logic of Black Urban Rebellions*, 77.
[103] George Putnam to Roger Winter, May 18, 1980 (8:15 am).
[104] "Miami: A Time for Healing," editorial, *Miami Herald*, November 3, 1980.
[105] Anthony Ramirez, "Making It: Miami Cubans Prosper by Sticking Together, Aiding Later Refugees," *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1980.

Cuban Americans and their status in the city were intrinsically linked to the subordination of the black community by non-Hispanic whites and by the police.

Following the riots, a story in the *Wall Street Journal* quoted a black youth counselor, not "exactly your typical race rioter," who had joined with others to throw stones at white motorists. "I get jibe from whites on the job, crap from Cubans, and when I come home, I get it from the police," the man explained, "I'm convinced this is the only way we can get justice."[106] The 1980 riot, then, became a release of frustrations that had been building for years and which were affecting Miami's African American community at large. The widespread nature of these frustrations and the embrace of this open rebellion against the city's status quo are made evident by the participation of a significant portion of the black community in these areas. It is estimated that 26% of the population in the affected areas participated in the rioting, compared to participation rates between 12-15% in the Detroit and Newark riots in 1967.[107]

The riots ultimately lasted three days and left fifteen dead and nearly four hundred injured. Property damage after the riot was estimated at $100,000,000, most of which had been targeted against businesses owned by Hispanics and non-Hispanic whites.[108] The consequences for the affected communities would last far longer than three days, but so too would the political fallout for the Carter Administration. African American community leaders, both locally and nationally, would be extremely critical of the federal government's response to the riot, with Jesse Jackson comparing it negatively to the response to the eruption of Mt. St. Helens and to the Mariel boatlift. The White House was reluctant to declare the situation a disaster for fear that it would encourage other disenfranchised African American populations

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[106] Susan Harrigan and Charles W. Stevens, "Roots of a Riot," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 1980.
[107] Harris, *The Logic of Black Urban Rebellions*, 98.
[108] Susan Harrigan and Charles W. Stevens, "Roots of a Riot," *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 1980.

around the country to initiate their own rebellions as a way to get federal aid into their communities.[109] Carter's problems would continue as officials visited Miami in the months after the riot and reported they were "deeply concerned" about the situation in the city, which they characterized as "extremely volatile." "Although we have tried to separate the problems," stated one report, "it is apparent to me that the impact of the influx of Cuban and Haitian refugees is inextricable from the plight of the indigenous Blacks largely concentrated in Liberty City and Overtown." Like the African Americans in these areas, federal officials came to recognize that the advantages accorded to Cuban refugees in the previous two decades and the recent influxes of refugees from Cuba and Haiti had exacerbated black unemployment and had "engendered a high degree of bitterness." While the problem was recognized, the official who filed the report had no recommendations on how to resolve this divide beyond recommending that the refugee influx and the civil disturbances be regarded "as two elements of the same problem." [110]

African Americans were not the only Miamians displeased with the new influx of refugees. While some non-Hispanic whites had been upset about the arrival of previous waves of Cuban exiles, the Mariel boatlift was particularly upsetting for many because of the sheer volume of refugees arriving in such a short time. The month of May alone saw a total of 94,181 Cubans arriving in the United States, a total larger than any previous year of migration. By the end of June, the U.S. Coast Guard's operations had significantly reduced the number of boats moving from the United States to Cuba and the entry of Cubans into the United States, but the

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[109] Gene Eidenberg and Bruce Kirschenbaum to Jimmy Carter, May 25, 1980, Folder—Miami Riots—Dade County Civil Disturbances (2), Box 252, Cabinet Secretary Paula Schneider's Subject Files, Staff Offices, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.

[110] Richard Hite to Gene Eidenberg, John White, and Rodger Schlickeisen, August 18, 1980, Folder—Miami Riots—Dade County Civil Disturbances (1), Box 252, Cabinet Secretary Paula Schneider's Subject Files, Staff Offices, Carter Presidential Papers, Carter Library.

total number of Cuban arrivals had risen to 115,436.[111] When the Cuban government finally closed the port of Mariel on September 25 and the last boat docked in Key West four days later, the total number of refugees from the boatlift was over 124,000.[112] While 62,541 marielitos were placed in the camps created by the federal government while they awaited sponsorship offers, the majority of the other refugees streamed into Miami at an unprecedented rate. Due to the housing shortage in Miami, many of the Cubans who could not get immediate sponsorship, but who authorities did not consider dangerous or suspicious, were housed in "tent cities" in parks and under expressways. The largest of these tent cities was erected under Interstate 95, to the east of Little Havana. [113]

Situated next to the Miami River, the Riverside Park Tent City had a Cuban refugee population in the hundreds which varied based on the resettlement of residents. By August 5, 1980, the camp had a population of 600 refugees, with 300 already having been resettled since the establishment of the camp. The population of the camp was overwhelmingly male; one report estimated that only fifty women resided there. When officials from the Cuban-Haitian Task Force visited Tent City they found that only three families resided in the camp, with a total of seven children all living in the same tent. Residents complained about mosquito infestations coming from the river and from stagnant water accumulating in the southwest corner of the camp. Others complained about the lack of sheets, soap, and towels. Because residents were allowed to leave and the camp could be visited by friends and acquaintances, however, some residents had bene able to obtain televisions, mattresses, and other supplemental furniture. Refugees were provided breakfast and dinner and were given food stamps that they might

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[111] Cuban-Haitian Task Force, "Chronology."
[112] García, *Havana USA*, 68.
[113] *Ibid*, 63.

procure their own lunches. While jobs were scarce in Miami, refugees were able to place job applications with the Florida State Employment Service. Other services were provided by volunteer agencies and Cuban American organizations.[114] Resources would only become more strained as the City of Miami estimated that more than 3,000 refugees passed through Tent City in the month that followed.[115]

While Tent City was established by the federal government it presented the Cuban Haitian Task Force with a potentially dangerous situation. One disgruntled official angrily reacted to public statements made by CHTF Director James Giganti to the press where he speculated about the dissolution of Tent City. He called public discussion of the camp's options "ill-advised," describing the situation with the population there as "already tense, if not explosive." He explained that headlines regarding the possibility of the population of the camp being moved around dramatically increased tensions among an unhappy population and that news needed to be disseminated among the camp residents by trusted sources, not the news media.[116] Beyond the possibility of violence from residents, the camp was an embarrassment to both the federal government and to local authorities. It was so significant an embarrassment to these entities that opportunistic entrepreneurs sought to "solve" the problems of local and federal governments. This was the case, for example, when a real estate broker by the name of Frank A. Vianello wrote Assistant City Manager Cesar H. Odio with an offer for a property "large enough, rural enough, and yet, near enough" to house the refugees away from the city's

[114] Mario A. Rivera to James Giganti, August 10, 1980, Folder—Tent City, Box 28, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.
[115] Christian R. Holmes to Eugene Eidenberg, September 4, 1980, Folder 5, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.
[116] Sergio Pereira to Chris Holmes, August 27, 1980, Folder—Tent City, Box 28, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.

center.[117] The visible presence of the camps was a significant problem, as it exacerbated the anger of city residents against the refugee groups.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that even before the refugee influx began, radio talk shows had "been abuzz with Anglos expressing anger about how quickly Miami has changed from an Anglo tourist resort to a major Latin city, where virtually no English is heard in many sections." The arrival of the refugees groups, however, brought about a particularly harsh backlash against both Cuban and Haitian refugees that was often racialized and tinged with xenophobia. One Miami resident named Richard Rosichan who lived near Little Haiti wrote of houses with garbage strewn lawns crammed with Haitians. Rosichan claimed that his children had found a "ritually slaughtered goat" near some railroad tracks, before declaring that it was "grossly unfair that one small area of one city should bear almost the entire burden of one of the most impoverished, unhealthy and unskilled wave of immigrants ever to cross our shores." The perception of the refugees as unskilled parasites was not uncommon, nor was it new, but it was particularly prevalent during the boatlift. "The U.S., South Florida, and Broward County have enough parasites already without bringing them over," one resident told the *Miami Herald* after hearing that a refugee processing center would be opened in an abandoned missile base in Miramar, north of Miami. Residents in the area were particularly concerned about the possibility of the refugees being housed there, believing they would "bring with them tuberculosis, venereal disease and other ailments." The Mariel and Haitian influxes only exacerbated the anger of Miamians over the changes in their city. Officials were less hyperbolic, but just as concerned about the effect of the refugees on the city and its resources. One of

[117] Frank A. Vianello to Cesar H. Odio, August 4, 1980, Folder—Tent City, Box 28, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.

Miami's city commissioners, the Cuban-born Armando Lacasa noted that Miami was quickly becoming "the refugee capital of the Americas."[118]

While officials in Miami were concerned, officials in the city of Miami Beach were more vocal, in large part because Cuban Americans had far less clout in that city. In late July of 1980, for example, Miami Beach's Mayor, Murray Meyerson, wrote a letter to President Carter asking for aid. Meyerson described an "intolerable situation" that had been created by "pouring more than 100,000 people into a community which has no housing surplus, no job surplus and limited welfare reserves." He described how hundreds of refugees had been "jammed" into substandard housing by well-meaning private charities and public agencies "with a month's rent paid and no hope of future funding for shelter, food, clothing or medical care." The refugees, he explained, had bene reduced to "extremities of poverty." These extremes often drove the men among the refugees to turn to crime. He claimed that among the refugees there was a percentage that, "under the Castro regime, lived by their wits or outside the law." This had resulted in a crime wave, noting that the crime rate in his city had risen by at least 30%, including rapes, armed robberies, and assaults over the previous 90 days. He pleaded with the president for help, claiming that many of the city's residents lived in fear and its law enforcement agencies were swamped. Murray explained that "simple humanity and a proper regard" for the refugees and the welfare of the citizenry made it imperative that the President declare a state of emergency in Dade County.[119]

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[118] Anthony Ramirez, "In a Strained Miami, Cubans and Haitians Help the Boat People," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1980.

[119] Murray Meyerson to Jimmy Carter, July 30, 1980, Folder 99, Box 23, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

Internal communications in Miami Beach's city government revealed that in order to deal with the increase in crime, an additional twelve officers per shift were needed on an overtime basis. This would result in $150,594.20 added to the city's budget every 30 days.[120] Police overtime was necessary, city officials explained, because of the concentration of "undesirables" in Miami Beach, one of the areas with the largest concentration of elderly persons in the nation. These individuals presented a constant danger to life and safety. "The psychological fear that pervades this elderly and senior group is real, pervasive and appalling," wrote City Manager Harold T. Toal. To reinforce these claims Toal included a comparison of statistics for the same week in September in 1979 and 1980. To date in 1979 there had been 229 robberies, 147 aggravated assaults, 15 rapes, and 6 homicides. By the same date in 1980, there had been 446 robberies, 279 aggravated assaults, 51 rapes, and 9 homicides.[121]

Miami Beach officials sought to show federal authorities the palpable fear among the city's elderly residents and forwarded the minutes of a City Commission meeting attended by several hundred elderly citizens in a letter to Congressman Claude Pepper and other federal officials. During the meeting, Nina Rosenberg, a Miami Beach resident of thirty-five years, recalled how beautiful and peaceful the community was. This had changed. "It's became just one big prison," Rosenberg stated, "We are locked in in our apartments." She told the audience that she had been mugged at 10 am the previous week by a man who had threatened to cut her face and that many people present had had similar experiences. It was then that she explained she did not have a problem with all refugees, only the criminals among them:

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[120] Jack Gordon to Hal Cohen, September 22, 1980, Folder 100, Box 23, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

[121] Harold T. Toal to James Giganti, September 24, 1980, Folder 100, Box 23, Series II, Cuban Refugee Center Records, CHC.

> Now, we understand that there are refugees that are fine people. We sympathize with them. We've got to help them. We don't mind to pay taxes extra to feed them, to shelter them but there are undesirable elements that when we see them and they turn back and hit us and mug us and rape us and are ready to kill us, well this is too much and this we cannot take.

Rosenberg explained that she too had once been an immigrant, but that she had come to the United States as a teenager and had worked twelve hours a day for $5 a week. The difference, she declared to applause from the room, was that nobody had put her in a hotel and given her food and "shelter and money and everything." She reiterated that there were good people among the refugees, but residents were being mugged for drug money, and the neighborhood Synagogue, barber shop, and stores had all been vandalized. Now it was the residents of Miami Beach who would be exiled from their homes, but they had no place to go.[122]

Rafael Peñalver, who would go on to provide legal representation for many marielitos, saw the issue of crime among the refugees as a natural consequence of their entry situation. Miami was in shock over the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees who did not speak the language and did not have jobs, many of them having no family support. "Any city you did that to would have a problem of people turning to crime to survive," Peñalver reasons. While Miami Beach city officials emphasized the more heinous crimes committed as part of the crime rate increase in South Florida, a significant number of the crimes that were committed were aimed at ensuring the survival of a refugee or a family of refugees. While petty larceny was one of the crimes that increased significantly, some of the offenses were drug related. In 1980, Miami was a major point of transit for the drug trade from Latin America into the United States. An influx of penniless, jobless refugees provided a pool of potential employees for Miami's drug runners. The refugees often worked as mules and couriers for the drug trade. Refugees would be offered

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[122] In appendix to Harold T. Toal to Claude D. Pepper, October 2, 1980, Folder—Miami Operations [1], Box 6, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.

as little as $100-$200 to transport a package from one part of the city to another. Many were caught, helping to drive up the crime rate, and found themselves facing drug trafficking charges.[123]

Fear of the danger and criminality surrounding the Mariel refugees spread well beyond South Florida. This was illustrated by the uproar surrounding the consolidation of the different holding camps into a single facility at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas starting in August, 1980. As the boatlift wound down and winter approached, officials sought to centralize the management of those refugees that were still being held at camps and who had not received sponsorship by moving all the refugees to Arkansas due to the milder weather when compared to other holding facilities. Officials recognized that there were negative connotations to Chaffee and a feeling that the refugees would be going to a more "penal" environment. Likewise, refugees feared losing those friends they had made at their camps and that their records would be lost in the move and they would be themselves lost, in a bureaucratic sense.[124] Even before consolidation, rumors and fears surrounding the camp and its population were common in Arkansas. The *Arkansas Gazette*, for example, ran a story in July of 1980 about a supposed cult called "The Way" being established in Fort Chaffee.[125] A report on operational issues at Fort Chaffee stated that security had been a major concern for the communities adjacent to the military base and for the State of Arkansas.[126] When the plan for consolidation had been announced by the federal government, the state's young governor, Bill Clinton, issued a press release in which he acknowledged that the plan reflected a "genuine concern and effort" to provide adequate

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[123] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[124] Russell R. Dynes to Tom Casey, August 18, 1980, Folder 5, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.
[125] See Donald E. Whitteaker, "Information Bulletin No. 1," July 25, 1980, Folder 3, Box 2, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.
[126] "Operational and Policy Issues at Fort Chaffee," March 5, 1981, Folder 1, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.

security for both the refugee population and the citizens of the surrounding community. Despite these good intentions, he and his staff had nineteen points of contention with the plan and seven further suggestions to ensure that the safety of the surrounding communities. These included the presence of military personnel when new refugees arrived at the camp, an increase of the camp's border patrol to at least twenty officers, patrols around the fence surrounding the refugee, and a regular headcount to ensure accountability.[127]

The federal officials in charge of Fort Chaffee's population often shared the concerns about the potential danger the refuges posed outside the camp. A confidential, internal memorandum numbered the camp's population at 1,600 by June of 1981 and described the residents in racialized terms and in terms of their records or difficulties. Single black males between the ages of 18 and 55 were said to comprise 95% of the population. Few had any job skills and "the vast majority have a prison record or psychiatric history." They estimated that 55 women remained in the camp, were between the ages of 18 and 35 and were black. Finally, six unaccompanied minors also resided at Fort Chafee despite being in the United States for over a year. Two were "psychotic," two "retarded," and two needed to be placed in a "structured psychiatric half way house," the report noted. This population profile, officials explained, "certainly indicates why Fort Chaffee poses a prime security risk." The refugees' profile was compounded by factors including the "frustration with the monotony of camp routine, uncertainty over the future and knowledge gleaned from the media that policy regarding them is muddled."[128] These conditions drove some into requesting release or return, as when one resident asked to be sent back to Havana where he had family, or, barring that, that he be

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[127] Bill Clinton, Press Release, September 11, 1980, Folder Camp Consolidation [3], Box 1, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Carter Library.
[128] "Status Report—Fort Chaffee—June, 1981," June, 1981, Folder 5, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.

transferred to a psychiatric facility in New Orleans.[129] Frustrations had already boiled over earlier in the year when, over two days in April, portions of the refugee population rebelled against federal authorities. This disturbance resulted in seventy injuries to both residents and camp personnel, including five hospitalizations, and an estimated $72,763 in damages.[130] Surrounding populations, however, were never forced to deal with mass escapes endangering their communities that some had feared.

While crime had been on the rise in Miami before the Mariel boatlift, the increase in crime, real or perceived, had created a culture of fear in the city and around the refugees. The *Miami Herald* reported in November, 1980 that in the previous two years 70,000 Miamians had purchased handguns. Over 40,000 of those guns had been purchased in the previous year alone.[131] There were those who did not believe that laying the blame of the city's ills at the feet of the Mariel refugees was either fair or productive. In a letter to the *Herald* in late December, Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh commended the paper on bringing attention to the plight of 1,761 Cubans still being held in federal detention facilities under suspicion of being "hardened criminals send to this country by the Cuban government." The continued detention of these individuals was extremely problematic to Walsh, particularly because those held for "exclusion hearings" were not considered to be entitled to due process by the federal government. "This is of doubtful Constitutionality, to say the least," Walsh wrote, "and in itself may be a violation of human rights." This did little to enhance the image of the United States as a defender of basic human rights. While he understood the temptation of looking for an easily identifiable cause for the increase in crime and that the Mariel refugees made a handy scapegoat, actual statistics

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[129] Orlaud Machado Alvarez to Barbara Lawson, November 7, 1980, Folder 2, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.
[130] Wilford Forbush to Jack Svahn, April 21, 1981, Folder 5, Box 1, Fort Chaffee Collection, CHC.
[131] "Miami: A Time for Healing," editorial, *Miami Herald*, November 3, 1980.

regarding the number of marielitos in Dade County jails were not available. It was not enough to provide estimates without any hard facts when impugning a whole group that just happened to be politically convenient. Mariel refugees were a particularly convenient scapegoat, Walsh reasoned, because they were "the only one that can provide the excuse for getting more Federal dollars." Authorities needed to provide factual information instead of estimates, or they ran the risk of further polarizing the community.[132]

Despite the efforts of Walsh and other voices of reconciliation, Miami was more polarized than ever before. The newest wave of refugees drove a wave of xenophobic fears of cultural displacement, disease, crime, and economic loss that drove polarization between a significant part of Miami's non-Hispanic whites and the city's immigrant populations, both new and established. This helped the fortunes of an inchoate English-only movement in South Florida. While similar movements would arise in other areas of the United States in later years, the historic bilingual ordinance of 1973 had become the target of the opponents of bilingualism in Dade County. In 1980, an organization that called itself Citizens of Dade United introduced an ordinance prohibiting "the expenditure of any county funds for the purpose of utilizing any language other than English or any culture other than that of the United States."[133] The new ordinance would not repeal the 1973 bilingual ordinance, but it would remove any and all county funds for bilingual county services. The drive for signatures to put this ordinance on the ballot was led by a woman named Emmy Shafer, a Holocaust survivor who had come to the United States after the Second World War at age 16. Shafer longed for Miami "the way it used

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[132] Bryan O. Walsh, "Mariel, Crime, and 'Scapegoats,'" letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, December 29, 1980.

[133] Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 161.

to be." She described the Miami of the past as "unbelievable. Friendly, no problems. You didn't feel you were in a foreign country."[134]

Eduardo Padrón, chairman of the Spanish American League Against Discrimination, claimed that the push to repeal bilingualism in Dade County came as a shock to the Cuban American community. "They have seen themselves as great contributors, and all the statistics show that," Padrón said, "all of a sudden that feeling of not being wanted, not being appreciated, hurts." Despite the divisions between Miami's Cuban and African American communities, this ordinance was staunchly opposed by black leaders. The Greater Miami chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People passed a resolution noting that the statement implied that "the only culture that should be promoted is that of the dominant group, the North American white group." Elements of Miami's business community also opposed the proposal as part of a group called Together for Dade's Future. The Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce spent $75,000 campaigning against the proposed ordinance. Despite this resistance, there was significant support for the Citizens of Dade United. A public opinion poll conducted in the months before the election showed that 62% of voters polled approved of the proposal and that the heaviest support came from Jewish voters and senior citizens, who favored the proposal 4 to 1. When those polled were informed that if the proposal passed storm evacuation notices would not be printed in Spanish and that hospital emergency room switchboards would not have Spanish speakers available, however, support for the new ordinance dropped to 49%.[135]

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[134] Jo Thomas, "Miami Area Divided Over Ballot Proposal to Drop Spanish as Second Official Language," *New York Times*, November 2, 1980.
[135] *Ibid*.

The day before the election, the *Miami Herald* declared that the city was sick. The disease that had left Miami "disoriented, in agony, and in danger of destroying itself," had been born of fire and water. "The fire of Liberty City and the water of Mariel have left Miami faltering, uncertain and divided, at the most crucial point in its history." The only solution was for all Miamians to come together and prevent the city's collapse with joint action. It was time to see if the city that had "once assimilated 600,000 Hispanics—and became an international financial center because of it—will now in its frustrations let 'Hispanic,' and especially 'Cuban,' become four-letter words." While the editorial did not make specific mention of the ballot proposal, it made it clear that Miami's Cuban community was fearful of backlash and rejection, much of it driven by the boatlift.[136]

The ballot proposal passed and became a new county-wide ordinance. There was confusion among county officials about the full implications of the new ordinance. The county maintained bilingual support for emergency services, but it stopped translating general documents and notices into Spanish. While the effects of the new ordinance were not clear, detractors were disturbed by the vote and found it polarizing. "It was a racist vote," said Monsignor Walsh, "The effect of the ordinance might be minimal… but the support of it by so many Anglos clearly indicates a resurgence of strong anti-foreign feeling regardless of the very positive economic impact of bilingualism here." Other opponents hoped the alliance made between the Hispanic community and the African American community might be "the beginning of a majority black-Latin coalition that could become a power in the local government." The same election saw the first Cuban-American elected to countywide office when Paul Cejas won a

[136] "Miami: A Time for Healing," editorial, *Miami Herald*, November 3, 1980.

seat on the school board with African American support.[137] The election had proved to be a major victory for the English Only movement. This encouraged the return of Citizens of Dade United, who, in 1988, pushed an English Only amendment to Florida's state constitution. That state-wide measure passed by 84%.[138]

The animosity aimed at the Cuban American community and to Hispanics in general did not dissipate as the boatlift ended. As time went on, the outward signs of the refugee influx began to dissipate. Tent city disappeared and the marielitos became less identifiable from other Cubans and other Latin American immigrants in the city. The increasing presence of other groups in the city only exacerbated the anger that many non-Hispanic whites felt. Some, in fact, found labels that defined them by their not being Hispanic problematic. One irate *Herald* reader was offended by the newspaper's use of the term "non-Latin white." This was "the most offensive term I can think of for Americans." The reader, Mary Ellen Higgin, found this to be a sign of reverse discrimination and an insult that would only add to the fires of polarization. "How can you expect this county to ever be together," Higgin asked, "when you insult the people who were born here, and who built this city?"[139] Another reader argued that "the real refugees" were not those who had fled politically oppressive regimes, but rather those South Florida residents leaving to seek a better life elsewhere. Those who felt that the good life they had once known would never return, decreed Fred Moffet, those were "the real refugees of South Florida."[140]

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[137] George Volsky, "Approval of Antibilingual Measure Causes Confusion and Worry in Miami Area," *New York Times*, November 9, 1980.
[138] Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, 161.
[139] Mary Ellen Higgin, "'Non-Latin white' an offensive term,'" letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, September 23, 1982.
[140] Fred Moffett, "The real refugees," letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, August 18, 1982.

The feeling that South Florida's "Americans" had been made refugees by the recent migrations and that they had been victimized by groups, that had taken their city from them, became a common one in the early 1980s. Bumper stickers reading "WILL THE LAST AMERICAN TO LEAVE MIAMI PLEASE BRING THE FLAG" were a common sight in the city. They became so prevalent, in fact, that the *Herald's* executive editor, John McMullan wrote a piece about how a lot of Miamians had had it "up to here" with the stickers and the people who placed them on their vehicles. McMullan had had enough of "homegrown American bigots" who thought themselves to have some exclusive franchise on the United States or any of its cities. "Spare me any more dim-witted Anglos who can't speak acceptable English themselves complaining because signs that may save their lives are also written in Spanish," McMullan wrote. Even as he took others to task over overt discrimination he also admitted he was rather fed up with newspaper editors like himself who should speak out more often, but did not. Until more open communication could bridge the gap between the polarized groups in the city, McMullan indicated he wanted a replacement bumper sticker, one that read: "WILL THE LAST BIGOTS PLEASE LEAVE."[141]

McMullan also explained in his comment that the "saddest local story of a globally sad week" was the formation of a Cuban American group in Miami that felt it had to "campaign to correct the Cuban refugees' image."[142] McMullan was referring to the creation of a committee of prominent Cubans calling their organization Facts About Cuban Exiles, or FACE. FACE members expressed significant concern about the impact a negative conception of Cubans had. "We, as Cubans, face one of the greatest problems in our long exile journey—that of misrepresentation to the rest of the world and of division among ourselves," explained

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[141] John McMullan, "Will Last Bigots Please Leave," editor's comment, *Miami Herald*, September 26, 1982.
[142] *Ibid*.

newspaper executive and FACE organizer Sam Verdeja. Media representation had become a significant problem which had made marielito a dirty word. For many Cuban Americans this had become offensive, "an affront to their pride." These prominent Cubans were proud of their individual achievements and they were proud of Dade County's majority Cuban Hispanic community, which had a combined annual income of $6,500,000,000. It was an impressive achievement and they sought to defend it. "I'll be damned if I let anybody spoil it," said banker Carlos Arboleya.[143]

Arboleya and his fellow FACE committee members were not alone in defending their community in the face of unfavorable portrayals in the media and the anger and resentment from other groups. Many had fought against what they saw as a negative portrayal when the producers attempted to bring the filming of Brian De Palman's *Scarface* remake to Miami. The film, starring Al Pacino as Tony Montana, told the story of the violent rise of a Mariel refugee from common criminal to international drug trafficker and of his grisly end at the hands of his former allies. The film's content, understandably, elicited some strong negative reactions from the city's Cuban community. Even as producer Martin Bregman threatened to move the film's production elsewhere, Miami City Commissioner Demetrio Perez Jr. prepared a resolution to deny the production the permits necessary to film on city property and on city streets. Bregman was puzzled by the reaction from the Cuban community. He was not making a film about Cubans in Miami, but a movie about a single gangster. "The movie has more crooked Jews than crooked Cubans," the producer stated. Further, he suggested that the movie would not give Miami or Dade County a bad image. After all, "it already has that image."[144]

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[143] Charles Whited, "Miami Cubans Fight Threat to Hard-Won Pride," *Miami Herald*, September 23, 1982.
[144] Jay Ducassi, "Bad Reviews May Drive *Scarface* Filming Elsewhere," *Miami Herald*, August 20, 1982.

While Perez framed his objection in terms of the possible danger to the city in terms of public relations in a letter to the Herald's editor, others were more direct in their defense of the Cuban American community itself.[145] *Herald* staff writer Guillermo Martinez argued against the filming because it could only further perpetrate a prevalent, and very often mistaken, stereotype about marielitos. Martinez recounted how after taking pictures of a crime scene where a deranged individual had murdered eight people and fled on a bicycle before being killed himself, a photographer exclaimed "it has to be a Mariel refugee… who else would be crazy enough to kill eight people in cold blood and then try to escape on a bicycle?" The murderer was eventually identified. He was not a marielito, he was not even Latino, but the stereotype about the Mariel refugees made more than one person conclude that this mentally-ill man had to be one. The stereotype was "so prevalent that when Hollywood decided to recast the gangster film classic, Scarface, there was never a doubt that the protagonist, the villain, had to be a Mariel refugee." Hollywood was both reacting to the stereotype and helping to perpetuate it. Miami's economy did not need the money that the production would bring if it damaged the image of Miami's Cuban community. What the Cuban community needed was an organization of Cubans "similar to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith—who will act in a responsible and nonpolitical manner to make sure that Cubans are not gratuitously insulted or slandered."[146]

Other Miami Cubans, and their allies, took to writing letters to the *Herald* to express their displeasure with the filming of Scarface because of the harm it would bring to the community's image. James Kassir wrote that the movie would only "hurt the image of hard-

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[145] Demetrio Perez , Jr., "A Commisioner's Objection to 'Scarface,'" letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, September 2, 1982.
[146] Guillermo Martinez, "Filming of 'Scarface' Harms Cuban Image," *Miami Herald*, August 28, 1982.

working Cuban-Americans."[147] Another reader attacked the Herald editorial board's choice of justifying the making of the film on economic reasons, stating the offending the sensibilities of any ethnic group was un-American, regardless of the profit or justification.[148] Ana F. Crucet declared that she and her fellow Cuban Americans would not "stand by and let Hollywood propaganda make us the object of ostracism and stereotyping as criminals by other ethnic groups."[149] Edgardo O. Meneses addressed "the Anglos who want to sell the image of their city for a measly $10 million," and reminded them that tourism in Miami and Miami Beach had already suffered significantly in the previous two years. Further, he asked why Hollywood did not make movies about Cuban freedom fighters instead of gangsters.[150]

Letters against the production of the film or in support of it became a fixture of the Herald's letters page during August and September of 1982. They were, in fact, so prevalent that they became the subject of parody. Fort Lauderdale resident Stu Schneider wrote the *Herald's* editor a letter in mid-September in which he described himself as being "shocked, appalled, and disgusted" about plans to shoot the film *Jaws III* in Key West. "Not all sharks are man-eaters, just a minority," wrote Schneider, "but, as usual, Hollywood has decided to focus on a few bad apples that ruin the whole batch." He went on to suggest that unless filmmakers intended to treat sharks fairly, they should not be allowed to film in South Florida. "Some things are more important than money," he concluded, "What's next, *Attack of the Giant Oysters*?"[151]

Where many in Miami were offended by the possibility of the movie being shot in their city, neighboring Miami Beach rushed a resolution to welcome the filming of *Scarface* to their

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[147] James Kassir, "Movie will hurt," letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, August 9, 1982.
[148] F. Mennitto, "Offensive move," letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, August 14, 1982.
[149] Ana F. Crucet, letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, August 27, 1982.
[150] Edgardo O. Meneses, letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, September 4, 1982.
[151] Stu Schneider, "Can the Film," letter to the editor, *Miami Herald*, September 16, 1982.

city.[152] Only two scenes of the film were shot in South Florida, both of them in Miami Beach. The film was filmed mostly in Los Angeles with Pacino in the lead and former *¿Que Pasa USA?* star Steven Bauer as his best friend and lieutenant Manny Ribera. While those opposed to the film's shooting in Miami ultimately won the day, they were unable to change the story's content or characterizations. Their image problems would only be compounded as the *Reader's Digest* article "From Cuba with Hate" was released later in the year.

The response of the Cuban American community to the marielitos' reputation in the national media and in Miami must be understood in the context of the politics of respectability.[153] While members of the community had to recognize that there were hardened criminals among the Mariel Cubans, they were also compelled to explain that the established Cuban American communities in the United States, as well as the vast majority of the marielitos, were good, honest people. As such, they were forced to place as much distance between themselves and those who had committed offenses in an effort to salvage the reputation of the larger community, reinforcing the positive accomplishments of the Cuban migration and the relatively easy assimilation of most Cuban refugees into the city's economic life.

During the boatlift and in the years immediately after, Miami's Cubans and those in other communities became keenly aware that, as the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out in 1980, political gains had not followed the Cubans' economic success. Prior to the boatlift, only 26% of

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[152] "Wanted: Scarface," *Miami Herald*, September 1, 1982.

[153] Evelyn Higginbotham discusses the idea of respectability as a political discourse in her work on black Baptist women's opposition of the social structures and symbolic representations of white supremacy. "While adherence to respectability enabled black women to counter racist images and structures," writes Higginbotham, "their discursive contestation was not directed solely at white Americans; the black Baptists women condemned what they perceived to be negative practices and attitudes among their own people." This reaction led Higginbotham's subjects to insist that African Americans conform to the norms of manner and morals of the dominant society. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993), 186-187.

Hispanics were registered to vote in Miami.[154] This had produced vulnerabilities that left them with limited clout in local and national politics and which were identified and exploited by their enemies. When Emmy Shafer drove the repeal of the bilingual amendment in 1980 she claimed that the Cubans got their own way in everything because local politicians were for sale and they quickly forgot that "the English people are the ones that vote."[155] In the aftermath of the boatlift, the referendum that eliminated official bilingualism in Dade County, and years of bad publicity many Cubans were calling for change and organization, for the political and social clout to match the community's standing in South Florida. Mariel set the stage for the next phase of Cuban American political activism and for a decade in which the local power that the community had accrued would be projected out nationally and internationally. Cuban Americans would see the significant power of their community to influence larger trends and events, but they would also be faced with the limits of that power.

[154] Anthony Ramirez, "Making It: Miami Cubans Prosper by Sticking Together, Aiding Later Refugees," *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1980.
[155] Jo Thomas, "Miami Area Divided Over Ballot Proposal to Drop Spanish as Second Official Language," *New York Times*, November 2, 1980.

# CHAPTER 6—"A CRISIS IN CLOUT": THE MATURATION OF CUBAN AMERICAN POLITICS, THE CUBAN LOBBY, AND THE LIMITS OF INFLUENCE, 1982-1995

Federal authorities and rioters watched each other tensely through the fence around the federal detention center in Oakdale, LA on Sunday, November 29, 1987. Nearly one thousand Cuban detainees had risen up in revolt on the night of Saturday, November 21, after news that a series of deportations would follow a new immigration agreement between the American and Cuban governments. The rioters set parts of the prison on fire and took hostages using homemade weapons.[1] Tensions escalated after a second group of Cuban detainees rioted and took the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia the following Monday.[2] As both parties waited for any signs of change, a helicopter owned by the federal government flew over the facility at a low altitude in an attempt to gain the attention of the prisoners. When the helicopter landed outside the perimeter of the detention center, two figures emerged and boarded a convertible jeep. The vehicle was driven by an FBI agent and it had been ready and waiting since the helicopter left England Air Force Base in neighboring Alexandria, Louisiana. One of these men, Cuban American lawyer Rafael Peñalver, occupied the front passenger seat of the vehicle and directed the driver as the jeep started to make a slow circuit outside the detention center's double chain-link fence.

Standing at the back of the jeep was Agustin Roman, the auxiliary bishop for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Miami. As the slow circuit continued, more and more prisoners began

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[1] Carlos Harrison, "Cubans Riot in Louisiana," *Miami Herald*, November 22, 1987.
[2] Fred Grimm, "Cuban Inmates Riot in Atlanta," *Miami Herald*, November 24, 1987.

to follow the vehicle on their side of the fence until a massive crowd of them came to a stop within view of a stage that authorities had set up for the bishop.[3] "This is a moment of peace," Bishop Roman told the detainees, "I want you to release the prisoners who are in your custody and I want you to demonstrate to the world the good will that every Christian should have in his heart."[4] Even as the bishop appealed to the Christian morality of the detainees, he also assured them that the agreement he and Peñalver had helped negotiate with the federal government was binding and would provide the fair system of hearings the rioters had demanded. To the astonishment of many, the rioters proceeded to lay down their arms on the detention center's yard and set about releasing the 26 hostages they had been holding.

The hostage situations in Oakdale and Atlanta were separated from the Mariel boatlift by more than seven years, but they were the direct result of the policies and attitudes formed during the boatlift and in its aftermath. In the years following the Mariel boatlift, the Cuban American community became more involved than ever before in American politics at the local, state, and national level. Many Cuban Americans would achieved significant "firsts" as they were elected to office in Dade County and beyond. This was also the time in which a powerful political lobby, the Cuban American National Foundation, was created by a group of powerful Cuban Americans in order to secure the community's political power, safeguard its image, and shape polices according to the foundation's worldview. The marielitos became more and more integrated into Miami's society and culture in this period, even as the city gained notoriety in American popular culture that promised, or perhaps threatened, that it was the "City of the Future." At the same time, those Cuban refugees who had committed offenses or were seen as

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[3] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[4] From the transcript of Agustin Roman's message to the rioting detainees, included in Carlos Harrison, Christopher Marquis, and Martin Merzer, "Oakdale Prison Siege Ends," *Miami Herald*, November 30, 1987.

a liability by many of the newly empowered Cuban Americans were underserved by those that might best advocate for them. The detainee riots in Oakdale and Atlanta and their resolution sprang from attempts by some powerful Cuban Americans to retain the power and influence they had gained by serving the best interests of the United States' government.

The years following the resolution of the hostage situations in Oakdale and Atlanta forced the Cuban community to react to a rapidly changing geopolitical situation even as it attempted to influence the outcome of events. The fall of the Soviet Union created a sense of hope in many of Miami's Cubans. The end of Fidel Castro's regime appeared to be at hand. The community redoubled its efforts to affect American policy toward Cuba in an effort to hasten Castro's downfall. American politicians at all levels sought the approval and support of the powerful Cuban American lobby. The limits of the community's influence would be tested by a new migration crisis that arose and fundamentally altered the United States' open door policy to Cuban refugees. For the city of Miami, the end of the Cold War would have to wait until 1995, if not until much later, as the Cuban presence had fundamentally changed the face of the city.

In the aftermath of the Mariel boatlift and the English Only vote in Dade County, members of the Cuban American community began to discuss the future. A year before the creation of Facts About Cuban Exiles, another organization began to take shape as influential Cuban Americans came together to discuss what could be done to advance the interests of their community in the United States and abroad. A group of wealthy Cuban American businessmen , many of whom had been Bay of Pigs veterans, came together to establish the Cuban American

National Foundation (CANF) in 1981.[5] By the late 1980s, CANF described itself as "an independent, non-profit institution providing information on the economic, political and social welfare of the Cuban people, both on the island and in exile," adding that the organization supported the concept of "a free and democratic Cuba." In pursuit of its mission, CANF supported "a general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Cuban concern, to fight bigotry, protect human rights, and promote cultural interests and creative achievement."[6]

One of the Foundation's founders and its long-serving chairman, Jorge Mas Canosa, recalled that when the organization was coming together its founders drew a parallel between the Cuban American position in 1981 and that of Cubans in 1933. Mas Canosa made allusion to the 1933 revolution and to how it put Cuba on a path to economic prosperity, telling those at the meeting that by 1958 the country was incredibly wealthy among countries in western hemisphere, but that politically it was plagued by corruption and oppression. He compared post-1933 to the situation of the Cuban Americans in the United States in 1981: the Cuban community was economically advanced but it was not politically powerful or sophisticated. "Same faces, same language, same thing about we talking in Spanish all the time, listening to the same radio stations, being perceived as a bunch of terrorists, right wingers, incapable of taking care of ourselves," Mas Canosa said about the public perception of Cuban Americans, "therefore

[5] María Cristina García, *Havana USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959-1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 147.
[6] The Cuban American National Foundation, "Cuban American National Foundation," circa 1988, Folder—[Pocket Folder] The Cuban American National Foundation [1988] (OA-ID 08276-014), Karen Barnes Files, White House Office of National Service, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX. (Hereafter Bush Library.)

we deserved Castro, [as we were] a bunch of fanatics that saw communists all around."[7] The community needed to fundamentally change the way in which it was seen by the larger public and they needed the power to influence that perception.

The problem, as Mas Canosa saw it, was that politics was a dirty word to the "best" Cubans; those who had proven themselves in the field of business. Mas Canosa believed that successful businessmen needed to get involved in politics because of their approach to problem solving. He believed that those who had a "pragmatic approach" should put away ideological, dogmatic views and enter the public arena. They needed to "try to grow as people and bring some maturity to what I thought at the time was a very amateur, very green, very inexperienced approach to Cuba and Cuban politics," recalled Mas Canosa, "and that's how the Foundation was created."[8] This focus on bringing the "best" Cubans to politics created an oligarchical structure. To be a CANF trustee, Cuban Americans needed to contribute at least $5,000 a year to the Foundation. A higher tier of directors required an annual payment of $10,000 a year.[9] Mas Canosa would later state that he contributed an average of $50,000 a year to the foundation.[10] This placed the management of the organization in the hands of those Cuban Americans who were most affluent. Only those who qualified for directorship were allowed to vote on foundation matters. Among these wealthy Cubans the directorship was exclusively male until 1990, at which time only three of its sixty six directors were women.[11]

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[7] Interview with Jorge Mas Canosa, 1993, Item 445, Cuban Living History Project, Florida International University Special Collections, Florida International University, Miami, Florida. (Hereafter FIU Special Collections.)
[8] Mas Canosa, 1993, Item 445, Cuban Living History Project.
[9] Maria de los Angeles Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors: Cuban Exile Politics in the United States* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1999), 115.
[10] Jorge Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996, Folder 2, Box 2, The New Republic-Jorge Mas Canosa Collection, 1979-1996, FIU Special Collections.
[11] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 115.

CANF established a principal base in Washington, not Miami, as Mas Canosa was of the opinion that they needed to "take the fight out of Calle Ocho and Miami Stadium and into the center of power." No longer should Cubans concentrate on commando raids. Instead, they should focus on influencing public opinion and governments.[12] Mas Canosa also believed that the creation of CANF had provided a safer outlet for the energies and frustrations of the Cuban American community. Referring to the factionalism that existed within the Cuban community in 1980 and 1981, he made allusion to the violence being perpetrated by members of the Cuban American community amongst themselves. In Mas Canosa's estimation, CANF served as an instrument by which the energies of his community could be refocused and channeled more positively:

> We made an effort to show [the Cuban American community] that there were other civilized ways to struggle for the democratization of Cuba, like creating Radio Marti, lobbying in Washington, doing an international effort to delegitimize Castro for his violation of human rights. And I think when you look back into history, during the last 15 years of assistance[sic] of the Cuban-American national foundation, the bombings stopped and the killings also came to a halt.[13]

The late 1970s and the early 1980s were a time of significant violence by Cuban American groups. This violence did not suddenly end with the creation of the Cuban American National Foundation. Bombings in Miami continued until at least 1983.[14] Mas Canosa's assertion that CANF's creation did bring about a new outlet for the energies of anti-Castro Cuban Americans is correct. As CANF gained influence, however, many would begin to question whether it was the

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[12] García, *Havana USA*, 147.

[13] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.

[14] In 1985, Eduardo Arocena, an anti-Castro activist who was already serving a life sentence for a bombing carried out in New York City, was convicted of seven bombings of businesses and Latin American consulates in Miami from 1979 to 1983. Arocena was suspected of being the leader of the terrorist group Omega 7, responsible for anti-Castro acts in Florida, New Jersey, and New York between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. "Anti-Communist Guilty in 7 Miami Bombings," *New York Times*, April 14, 1985.

natural result of those energies or if it was a group of powerful Cuban Americans coopting the energies of their community for their own particular vision through superior influence in American politics and a carefully controlled message.

CANF and its political action committee, the Free Cuba PAC, were modelled after the Jewish lobby that sought to influence U.S. policy related to Israel, particularly the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.[15] In order to successfully lobby Washington, Mas Canosa copied the structure and tactics of the most successful foreign policy lobbying group in existence.[16] "Deeply, I admire Israel deeply," he stated. CANF's directors made contributions to politicians who supported the organization's stance regarding Cuba. Mas Canosa strenuously argued that the foundation did not make political contributions, stating that CANF did not "get involved in any type of partisan politics."[17] CANF did not make donations directly. Instead, they were made through the Free Cuba PAC. Between 1983 and 1988, the Free Cuba PAC contributed more than $385,000 to candidates and sitting congressmen, both Democratic and Republican.[18] State and federal officials from Florida like Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Senator Connie Mack, and Governor Lawton Chiles often received CANF's aid. The Foundation's support extended beyond Florida and Florida's delegation to Congress, and was often provided to friendly politicians like New Jersey Representatives Bob Menendez and Robert Torricelli and Senator Ernest Hollings of South Carolina. These politicians provided support and political influence for the Foundation, just as the Foundation and its members made significant campaign contributions.

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[15] García, *Havana USA*, 147.
[16] Interview with Jorge Mas Canosa, 1993, Item 445, Cuban Living History Project.
[17] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.
[18] García, *Havana USA*, 147.

To receive this support, however, an elected official needed to embrace CANF's ideological standing in regards to Cuba's government. "I will say that the most important consideration for us to support any politician," Mas Canosa stated, "is how they—how he stands or she stands, regarding the Cuban issue." The support of CANF, its directors, and its political action committee could often gain the organization significant political allies out of candidates in tight races. The 1988 Senate Race in Connecticut, for example, saw the Free Cuba PAC support Joseph Lieberman over incumbent Lowel Weicker Jr. because Weicker stood in opposition to CANF's ideology on Cuba.[19] Lieberman went on to win this first election to the Senate by a margin of less than one percent and remained a steadfast ally of CANF and its politics. "He's been a friend of the Cuban cause," CANF executive director Joe Garcia said in 2000, "we have no questions where Joe Lieberman stands."[20]

While CANF sought to influence American policy toward Cuba, there were internal struggles from the start. When the organization started, the Foundation's board named Frank Calzón CANF's first executive director. Calzón had lobbying experience, having been the director of On Human Rights, a group that publicized human rights violations in Cuba and lobbied Congress against Castro's government. Mas Canosa and Calzón reportedly clashed over differing visions of where the Foundation's energies and resources should be focused. While Calzón wanted to continue mounting pressure on Washington to affect Cuba policy, Mas Canosa became increasingly embroiled in intra-communal disputes in Miami and broadened the Foundation's foreign policy focus to include other issues less directly related to Cuba. Calzón

[19] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.
[20] Anthony Boadle, "Lieberman a Close Ally of Miami's Cuban Exiles," *Reuters*, August 11, 200.

resigned and was replaced by José Antonio Font, who would, in turn, resign himself, protesting Mas Canosa's "dictatorial style."[21]

The Cuban American National Foundation and Mas Canosa developed a significant following among Cuban Americans. The organization gained contributions from more than fifty thousand members. Beyond the large contributions made by the Foundation's directors and trustees, the majority of donations made by common Cuban Americans were much smaller. Foundations as small as $10 a years were known to be made by people who trusted the Foundation and sought Castro's ouster. Many of his supporters regarded him as "the most powerful and influential leader to emerge in over thirty years of exile." Some of his supporters in Little Havana referred to him as "Señor Presidente."[22] Mas Canosa's reputation, his legend as a powerful figure both in exile politics and in American politics grew significantly. In a profile on Mas Canosa in *Esquire*, writer Gaeton Fonzi suggested that the simplest description of CANF's leader, that he was the most powerful Cuban exile in America, was like saying Michael Jordan was the best basketball player in Chicago.[23]

A significant part of Mas Canosa and CANF's rise to prominence was Ronald Reagan's election to the presidency in 1980. Some scholars have suggested that CANF was, in essence, the creation of conservative Republicans who stated that a powerful conservative political lobby was needed in Washington and who had been keeping an eye on the Cuban community since 1980.[24] María de los Angeles Torres has called into question CANF's supposed political neutrality, particularly during the first decade of its existence, noting that the goals and projects

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[21] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 116.
[22] García, *Havana USA*, 149-150.
[23] Gaeton Fonzi, "Who is Jorge Mas Canosa?," *Esquire*, January 1993, 86.
[24] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 115.

for which it lobbied "closely resembled many of Reagan's own priorities." She notes, for example, that CANF became an instrument by which public support could be provided to the Contras in Nicaragua. "The way to Havana begins in Managua," Mas Canosa repeatedly stated during the 1980s. In return for the support of CANF and other sectors of the Cuban exile and Cuban American community, the Reagan administration embraced a harder stance toward Cuba. Reagan took such measures as the 1982 restriction of travel to Cuba, established under new regulations prohibiting the transfer of American currency to the island. While exceptions were made for academics, professionals, and Cuban exiles with families still on the island, the adoption of these regulations established the first travel restrictions during peacetime in American history.[25]

Mas Canosa presented the relationship between CANF and the Reagan White House differently. In an interview in 1993, the CANF chairman stated that if not for the Foundation, the Reagan administration would have moved toward normalization of relations with Castro's Cuba as the Carter administration had. The United States and Cuba would have had full economic and diplomatic relations by the early 1990s and Cuba under Castro would be enjoying some relative prosperity. "I think that we made the contribution to assist the Cuban people in their struggle for democracy and freedom," opined Mas Canosa, "and that is probably the biggest achievement of the Cuban American National Foundation." In his estimation, the closeness between CANF and the Reagan White House was a testimony not to the organization's subservience to a conservative Republican agenda but to their own successful tactics. After all, what other organization could boast to have had the President of the United States at one of

[25] *Ibid*, 116-117.

their banquets a mere two years after its inception? "We didn't realize how powerful we could be," the CANF chairman said of the Cuban American community.[26]

The relationship between CANF and the Reagan White House was very much like that between other lobbying groups and presidential administrations. The needs of the Foundation coincided with Reagan's conservative politics and his hawkish stance toward the Soviet Union. As such, the goals and purposes of the lobby and of the White House often intersected but rarely overlapped completely. When Reagan was greeted by an ecstatic crowd in Little Havana in 1983, he was given a warm introduction by Mas Canosa, who dutifully endorsed Reagan's policies toward Central America. Mas Canosa, however, went further and urged the president to abolish any agreement that existed with the Soviet Union stating that the United States would not invade Cuba unless Soviet nuclear missiles were present on the island. Whether Mas Canosa truly believed this was a viable strategy, or that the president would even respond, did not stop him from gaining political favor from a crowd of potential constituents watching him make a direct request from the Commander in Chief of the U.S. armed forces. Reagan, in turn, did not address this request, but capitalized on the fervor created by his presence and Mas Canosa's introduction to denounce the "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan axis" that threatened the hemisphere with a "new colonialism."[27] Both men benefited from shared interests and audiences even as they diverged at different junctures.

One of the earliest shared successes of CANF and the Reagan Administration was the creation of Radio Martí. Named after Cuban Patriot José Martí, Radio Martí was intended to serve as a pro-democracy, anti-Castro voice that could be transmitted directly into Cuba as

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[26] Interview with Jorge Mas Canosa, 1993, Item 445, Cuban Living History Project.
[27] Alfonso Chardy, "Reagan Rips Castro Rule As 'Fascist,'" *Miami Herald*, May 21, 1983.

counterprogramming to the Cuban government's state-run media. Funded by the U.S. government, Radio Martí attacked and determined to destroy the Castro government's "information monopoly." CANF's proposal was submitted as a bill by Senator Paula Hawkins of Florida. Political observers did not expect the bill would meet with much success. Quite simply, Radio Martí did not seem necessary. Cubans on the island already had access to Miami radio and its myriad of anti-Castro stations and viewpoints and to the Voice of America. Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut stated that regardless of how one argued for it, Radio Martí was still "baloney." Mas Canosa, CANF, and Radio Martí also faced opposition from the State Department's U.S. Interests Section in Havana, which had made an agreement regarding the release of political prisoners and an orderly emigration process in the aftermath of the Mariel boatlift. Section Chief Wayne Smith was concerned that Castro would cancel the recent agreement if the Radio Martí bill was passed and signed into law.[28] Smith was right. When Radio Martí started operations in 1985, Castro cancelled the immigration accord that his government had arrived at with the United States in 1984.[29] Smith resigned his post.[30]

Once Radio Martí was signed into law, President Reagan appointed Jorge Mas Canosa and other Cuban exiles to the board of directors of the station. On Cuban Independence Day, May 20, 1985, Radio Martí made its first broadcast from a facility in Marathon Key, Florida.[31] Along with news programs, Radio Martí also broadcast entertainment programming that included salsa and romantic music, American rock 'n' roll and a radio soap opera. It also sought to influence minds in Cuba through fair reporting. Where Miami's radio stations called Fidel Castro "the tyrant" and referred to Nicaragua's government as the "Sandino-Communist

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[28] Gaeton Fonzi, "Who is Jorge Mas Canosa?," *Esquire*, January 1993, 86.
[29] García, *Havana USA*, 148.
[30] Gaeton Fonzi, "Who is Jorge Mas Canosa?," *Esquire*, January 1993, 86.
[31] García, *Havana USA*, 148.

government," Radio Martí adhered to the Voice of America's rules and had to strive for fairness and impartiality. Thus, when it spoke of Sandinista leader and president of Nicaragua Daniel Ortega it referred to him as "the head of the Nicaraguan government."[32] While members of Miami's broadcasting community were uncomfortable with the new station's "middle ground" and the tone it took in its reporting, they were still supportive of the work that Radio Martí was doing. "When Radio Marti says that Cubans die in Angola, adjectives are not essential," said WRHC president Salvador Lew, "truth defeats all Communist governments."[33] The creation of the station was also portrayed as a great success for Cuban Americans in the United States, particularly as a symbol of greater political maturity and a growing appeal to politicians of different political leanings in the United States. "By being able to relate to conservatives as well as liberals, we have substantially changed our image," Mas Canosa told the *Miami Herald* when asked about the lobbying efforts that brought about the creation of Radio Martí.[34]

Despite the controversy surrounding the creation of Radio Martí, the station was lauded for the quality of its broadcasts. The *New York Times* admitted that despite its original concerns about the station, Radio Martí had "avoided propaganda and supplemented, not duplicated, commercial Spanish-Language broadcasts from Florida."[35] The conservative *Washington Times* called it an "unprecedented challenge to communism," and noted that the station's news broadcasts were "scrupulously fair and accurate."[36] The *Washington Post* reported that by all accounts, the station had done "a first-class job" of winning a significant Cuban audience,

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[32] Andres Viglucci, "Rock, Sports News Lure Cuban Listeners," *Miami Herald*, May 26, 1985.
[33] Lourdes Meluza, "Broadcasts' Mild Tone Criticized," *Miami Herald*, May 26, 1985.
[34] Sandra Dibble, "Cuban-Americans Reap the Rewards of Diligent Effort," *Miami Herald*, May 26, 1985.
[35] García, *Havana USA*, 148.
[36] Georgie Anne Geyer, "Coup at Radio Marti?," editorial, *Washington Times*, March 13, 1990.

forcing Cuba's state-run media to compete with it, and "avoiding the more conspicuous sinkholes of émigré politics."[37]

Within five years of the station's foundation, however, Mas Canosa was embroiled in a public scandal over the perceived introduction of Cuban American politics into Radio Martí's operations. By 1989, Mas Canosa and CANF pushed for the establishment of a television station counterpart to Radio Martí, TV Martí. Despite the success of Radio Martí, the idea of TV Martí met with resistance. Critics suggested that unlike the successful radio broadcasts, the television broadcasts would be of poor quality and easily jammed by Castro's government. Others warned that the Cuban government would (understandably) see it as a sign of aggression. Finally, there were those who suggested that it was wasteful to spend taxpayer dollars broadcasting American sitcoms dubbed into Spanish.[38] Some, like Radio Martí director Ernesto Betancourt, argued that TV Martí might bring about retaliations against the radio station and that the intended funds should be funneled into the already existing and successful enterprise.[39]

Betancourt's criticisms were not well received by Mas Canosa. On March 6, 1990, on the eve of TV Martí beginning a set of test broadcasts to Cuba, Betancourt wrote a ten-page memorandum to his superiors at the U.S. Information Agency. The document described "a series of bizarre incidents" that made him believe Mas Canosa was attempting to engineer his removal from Radio Martí. Mas Canosa was chairman of the presidential advisory board that recommended policy for Radio and TV Martí. According to Betancourt, Mas Canosa had complained to the Foundation's directors that they had "lost control" of Radio Martí and they had pressured the station to increase coverage of their organization in their broadcasts. Within

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[37] "Their Man in Havana," editorial, *Washington Post*, March 18, 1990.
[38] García, *Havana USA*, 149.
[39] Torres, *In the Land of Mirrors*, 115.

two days of Betancourt sending his memorandum, he was informed that he was being transferred out of TV Martí's directorship to another position. While Betancourt's style had been described as autocratic and he had had several disputes with station staff, he was also credited with having kept the station independent and free of exile politics. "I believe Mr. Betancourt was very intelligent in how he handled these kinds of things," said former CANF executive director Frank Calzon, "until now Radio Marti has been operated as an independent station."[40] Within days of his allegations leaking to the press, Betancourt was ordered to clear his office and told he had been placed on administrative leave. Staffers at Radio Martí reported that Betancourt was charged by his superiors with "waging war for three days against the USIA."[41] Mas Canosa took to the *Herald's* opinion page to declare victory, noting that "Betancourt's power grab failed."[42]

Media outlets, both liberal and conservative, were less effusive about the removal of Betancourt from Radio Martí's leadership and Mas Canosa's role in it. The same day the *Herald* ran Mas Canosa's piece, the newspaper's editorial board admonished that, regardless of what had happened between CANF, USIA, and Betancourt, it was more important than ever that the federal government salvage the integrity of Radio Martí. The newspaper saw a serious conflict between the Foundation's nature as a political lobby and the station's legal and moral mandate to be "scrupulously objective." Where CANF had started as an "anti-Castro informational clearing house and political action group," it had recently "taken on the coloration of a future political party in a post-Castro Cuba." Calling Mas Canosa's desire to become president of Cuba after Castro's fall a "matter of record," the *Herald* declared that the "linkage between a Federal

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[40] Andress Viglucci and Sandra Dibble, "Director Says He Was Forced Out of Radio Martí," *Miami Herald*, March 13, 1990.
[41] Sandra Dibble, "Radio Martí Chief Ordered to Clear Office," *Miami Herald*, March 15, 1990.
[42] Jorge Mas Canosa, "Betancourt's Power Grab Failed," *Miami Herald*, March 17, 1990.

agency and the politically ambitious head of a politically active foundation should be severed." This was unacceptable in principle, and it was damaging to the one thing Radio Martí could not afford to lose: its credibility.[43]

The *Washington Post* made it clear that this sort of back-room politics could not come at a worst time. The *Post* was disturbed by what it saw as "minimal denials of political influence" by the Voice of America and the United States Information Agency. TV Martí's legality was already coming under question, for it to "start up just as its radio counterpart comes under a political cloud" was inappropriate.[44] The most strident attack against Mas Canosa and his influence at Radio Martí came from journalist Georgie Anne Geyer, whose accusations of malfeasance against the CANF chairman did not stop at maneuvering to have Betancourt removed from the station. She accused Mas Canosa of being "so impudent in his actions that he even made a deal between the pending TV Marti and Channel 23 in Miami to broadcast to Cuba." Mas Canosa made this deal on behalf not of TV Marti, but of the Foundation. "So he, and not the appropriate American officials," Geyer charged, "already has negotiated what could be TV Marti's first broadcast to Cuba." Mas Canosa was dangerous to Radio Martí because he would cost the station effectiveness and help consolidate Fidel Castro at a dangerous time by reviving fears of American meddling. Before this could happen, however, Geyer suggested that Radio Martí would simply be destroyed as the American people and Congress would refuse to keep spending $13,000,000 a year on Radio Martí and another $16,000,000 on TV Martí to support the ambitions of one man and his foundation. If "Mas and company" took over at the station, Geyer warned, "all that integrity and care will go down the drain, since to all intents and

[43] "Unplug the Connection," editorial, *Miami Herald*, March 17, 1990.
[44] "Their Man in Havana," editorial, *Washington Post*, March 18, 1990.

purposes Mas's foundation has now become a political party already making plans to take power in some dreamed-of, nonexistent Cuba."[45]

Mas Canosa reportedly admitted that he was interested in being the first democratically elected president of a post-Castro Cuba.[46] He objected, however, to claims that his work with CANF was driven by this desire. When asked during a deposition if this motivation being ascribed to him was harmful, Mas Canosa insisted that it was. "To say I'm doing this because I have the political ambition to become president is in a sense, to taint the struggle for the democratization of Cuban that I have been involved in, since I was 15 years of age," Mas Canosa stated. He reiterated that he pursued his work with CANF because he believed in democratic values and because he believed that the Cuban people deserved a democratically elected government, respect for human rights, a free market economy, and to live in peace, democracy, and prosperity.[47] His critics, however, did not often believe his motivations to be so noble. His detractors gave him names such as "Señor Mas y Mas" and "the Godfather."[48]

While CANF would continue to be a controversial organization for the remainder of Mas Canosa's tenure as its chairman and beyond, there were initiatives that the organization undertook that strayed from its more overtly political actions and sought to aid the Cuban community in the United States and abroad. This was the case when, in 1988, CANF pioneered a new form of private sector cooperation with the United States government in the area of refugee resettlement. The previous year, the Department of State, the Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, and the Immigration & Naturalization Service had created, by

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[45] Georgie Anne Geyer, "Stop Mas Canosa's Takeover Attempt," *Miami Herald*, March 17, 1990.
[46] García, *Havana USA*, 150.
[47] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.
[48] García, *Havana USA*, 150.

presidential order, the Private Sector Initiative (PSI) program. The PSI program was established around the idea that private sector groups could work to secure stateside sponsors, employment on arrival, and provide further assistance to arriving refugees to become "productive members of communities and with appropriate medical care coverage so they will not access public assistance." The program fit well with the larger drive for smaller government and non-governmental solutions of the Regan Administration, particularly as all "reasonable costs" of the refugee admissions were to be privately sourced. Between June of 1988 and the end of 1991, CANF's PSI program provided the resources with which 7,000 Cuban refugees were resettled in the United States. Literature on the program boasted that it had represented "an impressive net savings of between 35 to 50 million dollars to the U.S. taxpayer."[49]

CANF did not deal directly with the Cuban government while it operated its PSI. Most of the refugees who arrived as part of this initiative arrived from third countries where they had often been living for years. Refugees came to the United States under CANF sponsorship from over twenty countries including Costa Rica, Panama, Spain, Belgium, Italy, Canada, Haiti, Mexico, Bolivia, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic.[50] What was perhaps most significant about this new wave of arrivals was that many of them were reaching the end of a journey that had started almost ten years before at the time of the Peruvian Embassy Crisis and the Mariel boatlift. These first arrivals were among the many thousands of Cubans who had gone on to third countries believing that they would be staying there only briefly before moving on to the United States. "These are the first of the forgotten," wrote *Miami News* columnist Bonnie M. Anderson about those who had expected a brief stay elsewhere, an expectation that became "a cruel joke

[49] "Cuban American National Foundation Private Sector Program," circa 1992, Folder—[Pocket Folder] The Cuban American National Foundation [1988] (OA-ID 08276-014), Karen Barnes Files, White House Office of National Service, Bush Library.
[50] "Cuban American National Foundation Private Sector Program," circa 1992.

of destiny." Anderson credited the Foundation for the emotive reunions that took place in Tamiami Park in the early fall of 1988. "It was like the hundreds of thousands of other Cuban family reunions we've seen in South Florida," Anderson wrote, "and it was like no other."[51]

Regardless of whether the Cuban American Heritage Foundation's projects were actually aimed at improving the lives of Cubans and Cuban Americans or they were meant to serve a Cuban political future directed by Jorge Mas Canosa and the Foundation's other directors, the creation and growth of the organization established a powerful Cuban American lobby with access to the corridors of power not only in Washington but in other world capitals. The relationship between CANF and the Reagan administration served the purposes of both groups and helped establish the legitimacy of the lobby. During this same time period, however, other Cubans were also making significant inroads into politics at the local, state, and national levels.

"Because of my father and what happened to him, politics had affected my life a great deal," said Xavier Suarez, the first Cuban-born mayor of Miami. "I was impelled by a desire for change, and I decided to get into it."[52] Suarez was almost twelve years old at the time of the Bay of Pigs Invasion when his family was placed under house arrest under suspicion of counter-revolutionary sympathies. His family was allowed to move to the United States in July of 1961 and settled in a suburb of Washington when his father, Manuel Suarez Carreno, found work as an engineer to support his fourteen children.[53] Suarez had grown up in the mid-Atlantic, was

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[51] Bonnie M. Anderson, "Latest Arrival of Cubans Ends Cruel Joke of Destiny," *Miami News*, September 12, 1988.
[52] "Xavier Suarez," *Miami Herald Tropic Magazine*, September 28, 1986.
[53] Jon Nordheimer, "Man in the News: Xavier Luis Suarez," *New York Times*, November 14, 1985.

educated at Villanova University and at Harvard Law, and came to Miami in 1975 as an outsider whose Spanish had practically vanished because he had not used it in years. Suarez came to the city because it was "fertile ground politically" and because "subconsciously" he wanted to reconnect with his roots.[54] Suarez's lack of political connections and anti-Castro bona fides made him an unlikely candidate to become the first Cuban born politician to gain city-wide office. As with other Cuban American politicians, however, Suarez would come to master a balance between appealing to a wider audience than traditional exile politicians and embracing his position as part of a transnational political landscape in which local officials needed to comment or become embroiled in international policy.

Suarez conducted three unsuccessful campaigns between 1979 and 1983. When he ran for city commissioner in 1979 he was defeated by Armando Lacasa, another Cuban who campaigned on a platform strongly focused on anti-communism. He lost more narrowly during his second campaign for commissioner in 1981, this time against Demetrio Pérez Jr. In 1983, poised for another run at commissioner, he instead decided to challenge incumbent mayor Maurice Ferré. Ferré, a Puerto Rican businessman of Cuban descent, had won five two-year terms as mayor since 1973, and in the 1983 campaign he used Suarez's Cuban identity as a wedge issue with voters. Ferré addressed ran a series of radio ads aimed at Miami's black community which played on the old divisions between Miami's Cubans and other ethnic groups. A Suarez victory would bring about a "Cuban takeover of Miami," which was a frightening prospect as "the mayor should be the mayor of the total city, not just one ethnic group." While Suarez cried foul at Ferré for playing ethnic politics, his own campaigners were caught with printed cards that read "Cubans vote Cuban" in Spanish. Suarez ultimately lost the 1983

[54] "Xavier Suarez," *Miami Herald Tropic Magazine*, September 28, 1986.

election by a margin of 36,417 to 30,056. He obtained 73% of the Hispanic vote and 47% of the non-Latin white vote, but Ferré overtook him by carrying 96% of the black vote.[55] Ferré's tactics against Suarez had borne fruit against the young Cuban upstart and delayed his election as the first Cuban born mayor of Miami.

In November of 1985, Suarez once again faced Ferré in a crowded mayoral election that also included Cuban American banker Raul Masvidal. This time, however, Suarez employed an electoral strategy that centered on a victory in a runoff election. During the general election, Suarez stepped back and allowed Masdival to weaken Ferré's position with the African American constituency by criticizing his firing of the African American City Manager, Howard Gary. Masvidal's attacks on Ferré were particularly effective and pushed the incumbent Mayor to third place in the general election. Suarez had prepared for a runoff, but Masvidal did not have a strategy for this eventuality.[56] Suarez spent the week between the general election and the runoff attacking Masvidal for lacking a substantial policy platform and for his ties to special interests. On Tuesday, November 12, Suarez easily defeated Masvidal by obtaining significant support from Miami's Hispanic population and the majority of the votes cast by non-Hispanic whites. In the first round, Suarez finished fourth among non-Hispanic whites, but in the televised debate prior to the runoff he made strong appeals to the white community and he obtained the endorsement of the non-Hispanic white organizations that had supported Mayor Ferré. Suarez also broadened his base among African American voters by obtaining the votes that had gone to sociologist Marvin Dunn and Mayor Ferré.[57]

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[55] "Xavier Suarez," *Miami Herald Tropic Magazine*, September 28, 1986.
[56] *Ibid*.
[57] Rick Hirsch, "Suárez arrolla," *El Miami Herald*, November 13, 1985.

In his inaugural speech, Suarez made a promise to knock down the "dividing walls" that plagued community relations in the city.[58] In order to create unity, however, Suarez, the political outsider, needed to reinforce his anti-communist credentials with the Cuban American community. During the campaign leading up to the runoff election, City Commissioner Joe Carollo accused Suarez of having socialist leanings and made suggestions that the candidate was "friendly with a Castro agent."[59] Suarez quickly embraced a stringent anti-communism in his public appearances as Mayor. The year following his election, Suarez was present at the site of dueling rallies related to American aid to Nicaragua's Contra rebels. The pro-Contra crowd, composed mostly of Cuban Americans, turned against the anti-Contra crowd, launching eggs, rocks, and glass bottles. While a police riot control squad was brought to contain the confrontation, the situation still required that the 200 anti-Contra demonstrators be removed from the area by bus. After this removal, some of the pro-Contra demonstrators moved into the space previously controlled by the political opposition and burned their signs. Rather than defusing tensions, Suarez made references to the "Marxist groups" in the anti-Contra rally and inflamed the situation by remarking that "unfortunately," they had the right to be on the other side of the street.[60]

As his tenure as mayor continued, Suarez made important political strides in Miami. Suarez consolidated his power over the Miami Commission by helping oust his former accuser Joe Carollo and by pushing through a ballot measure that changed the Mayor's term from two years to four.[61] Even as he strengthened his position in municipal politics, Suarez continued to

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[58] Xavier Suarez, "I'll Knock Down 'Dividing Walls,' Mayor Says," *Miami Herald*, November14, 1985.
[59] Rick Hirsch, "Suarez Vows He Will Unite Miami," *Miami Herald*, November 14, 1985.
[60] Sonia L. Nazario, "Freedom of Speech Is a Debatable Issue for Many in Miami," *Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 1986.
[61] Tom Fielder, "El sello personal de Xavier Suárez," *El Nuevo Herald*, September 11, 1985.

engage issues of international politics. In 1988, he responded to an article by University of Miami professor Enrique Baloyra regarding the contentious tone and accusations of communism that arose when anyone deviated from a doctrine of absolute isolation regarding Castro's Cuba. In an opinion piece he conceded that while the Cuban American community needed to be more tolerant and open to differing opinions on how to defeat Fidel Castro, but there was no room for any sort of dialogue or engagement with Castro himself. "What is there to discuss with Castro," Suarez asked, "save for his disappearance from this planet?" Anyone who suggested a change in strategy from the encirclement and isolation of Castro's regime needed to be reminded that no communist state ever experienced regime change through discussions or treaties. "History shows that communists only understand strength; and it is up to us to teach our children this historical reality," Suarez concluded, "as it is to prepare them to discuss strategy with their University of Miami professors."[62]

In 1990, Nelson Mandela visited Miami to speak out against apartheid in South Africa. Mandela had made statements of solidarity with Fidel Castro in the past and was met with protests from the Cuban American community. Suarez, along with five other Cuban American mayors of area cities, signed a declaration criticizing Mandela for not denouncing Cuban human rights violations.[63] Suarez and the Metro-Dade Commission refused to honor Mandela during his visit because he would not retract his statements. Following these events, several African American organizations planned to boycott Miami as a convention destination unless Suarez issued an apology. Suarez's office responded by stating that he would not issue a public

[62] Xavier Suarez, "Diálogo, ¿para qué?," *El Nuevo Herald*, June 9, 1988.
[63] Howard W. French, "Mandela Travels to Miami Amid Protests Over Castro," *New York Times*, June 29, 1990.

apology.[64] The economic boycott of Miami by African Americans throughout the nation started on July 17 and lasted for 151 days. It cost the city an estimated $12,000,000 in tourist and convention revenue. Suarez made a speech to try to end the boycott, but he did not apologize in his speech. He explained that he regretted the backlash that had resulted from Mandela's snubbing. One supporter of the boycott judged Suarez's statement a "non-apology." He declared that a true apology was still necessary to reconcile racial tensions in Dade County, but he suspected that it would not be politically expedient for Suarez to apologize since the majority of his constituents were Cuban.[65]

While Suarez and others were succeeding in local politics, others attained electoral successes that projected the Cuban American community to the state and federal levels. In 1982, the Cuban American owner of a private school in Miami-Dade County, Ileana Ros, won an election to represent a district in western Dade County that was increasingly Hispanic and Republican in the Florida House of Representatives. While in Tallahassee, Ros met Dexter Lehtinen, a Democratic state representative from Perrine, a heavily rural, Democratic stronghold in Dade County. After a one-year courtship, Ros and Lehtinen got married and one year later Lehtinen changed parties and joined his wife in the Republican Party. In 1986, Ros-Lehtinen and her husband ran joint campaigns for State Senate and after twin victories joined a conservative coalition that unseated liberal Democrat Ken Jenne from the Senate presidency and backed conservative Democrat John Vogt. By helping unseat Jenne, Lehtinen and Ros-Lehtinen obtained significant committee chairmanships and access to the Senate's leadership. Using this

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[64] Arthur S. Hay, "Black Groups Plan a Miami Boycott to Protest City's Treatment of Mandela," *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 1990.
[65] "Miami Mayor's Apology Still Needed to End Economic Boycott," *Atlanta Daily World*, December 20, 1990.

access, Lehtinen obtained Governor Bob Martínez's endorsement for the open seat of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida.[66]

In May of 1989, former Senator and long-serving Democratic Congressman Claude Pepper died suddenly in his sleep. A special election was held in August to fill Pepper's seat. Ros-Lehtinen ran a campaign to try to overcome the significant Democratic majority in Pepper's district. Her opponent, Democrat Gerald F. Richman obtained large margins among African Americans and non-Hispanic whites in the election. Richman crafted a slogan that played on the concerns of local non-Cubans worried about the increased power of the Cuban community. "This," he said of Pepper's congressional vacancy, "is an American seat." Ros-Lehtinen cancelled all debates, stating that she would not dignify Richman's "racist" campaign. Richman could not overcome "a giant, unified Hispanic electorate determined to send one of their own to Congress," particularly a Hispanic candidate who benefited from fund-raising visits by President George Bush and his Vice President Dan Quayle. Ros-Lehtinen overcame Richman 53% to 47% and after having been the first Cuban woman in both chambers of the Florida Legislature she achieved three further milestones, becoming the first Cuban American, first Republican, and first woman in Congress from Dade County. On the night of her victory, Celia Cruz, the Cuban queen of salsa, entertained the crowd of supporters waiting for the triumphant candidate. Cruz joyfully exclaimed that the people had spoken and "everyone" had chosen Ileana Ros. As she exited the stage, however, Cruz deemphasized the fact that "everyone" had chosen the candidate by triumphantly shouting into the microphone, "The Cubans won!"[67]

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[66] Luis Feldstein Soto, "Los Lehtinen, Pareja Estelar de la Política," *El Nuevo Herald*, September 6, 1989.
[67] Luis Feldstein Soto, "It's Ros-Lehtinen, 53-47%," *Miami Herald*, August 30, 1989.

Within days of Ros-Lehtinen's election, an opinion piece ran in *El Nuevo Herald* that claimed that her electoral victory had made clear one fact: "every day it's more difficult to be a Cuban in Miami." The author, Agustin Tamargo, stated that when the Cuban population was small and "in order to survive we had to wash cars or pick tomatoes in the fields, we didn't bother anyone," but in the opinion of several groups the community had moved too fast, gone too far, and needed to be contained. These different groups each had their own perspectives and needs, but they had the same objective: "that the Cuban be stopped in his race toward positions that they believe belong to them because they are superior or because they were here before us." These groups, however, did not recognize the role that Miami's Cuban community had played in transforming the city into an economic juggernaut of increasing cultural importance. "Miami has been declared another of the capitals of Latin America," Tamargo wrote, "Miami is an experiment, Miami is a miracle." While this change had not been achieved only by the city's Cuban community, the Cubans had been "active and prime agents of Miami's revitalization, the magnet that with its language, its work ethic, and its entrepreneurial spirit" had brought millions of tourists and massive revenue streams that would otherwise have gone to Texas or California. Any way you looked at it, it was the Cuban presence that had changed Miami, a reality that only someone who had never visited the city could deny. Others, be they African American, Jewish, or Anglo, might resent the young Cuban politician who made it to the U.S. House of Representatives. The resentment might be unwarranted, but in order to move beyond it the Cuban community needed to stop crying "communist" every time someone had a differing opinion. "Castrism and McCarthyism go hand in hand," Tamargo warned.[68]

[68] Agustin Tarmargo, "Ser Cuban en Miami," *El Nuevo Herald*, September 3, 1989.

Many expected that when Ros-Lehtinen arrived on Capitol Hill she would vote along Republican Party lines. After she was elected, Ros-Lehtinen was described by the *Miami Herald* as "a conservative party loyalist."[69] The new Congresswoman quickly made an impression. A fellow freshman Republican told reporters that Ros-Lehtinen had made things on the Hill far livelier. "She's our spark," said Representative Tom Paxton. Ros-Lehtinen fell in line with most Republican positions in Congress, as when she supported President Bush's veto on government funding for abortions in the cases of rape and incest. There were other issues in which the young Representative broke with her fellow Republicans. This was the case when a bill came before Congress early in her first term that meant to grant temporary refuge to Nicaraguan, Salvadoran, and Chinese refugees. Ros-Lehtinen believed that the Nicaraguan refugees deserved asylum because they were flying the Marxist Sandinista regime but the Salvadorans did not, stating that "there is democracy in El Salvador." Ultimately, Ros-Lehtinen voted for the Moakley-DeConcini Bill, mirroring the positive votes of many Democrats and in direct opposition of the President who had helped get her elected, George Bush. She also broke ranks with a group of Republicans who attacked a bill to pay $1,250,000,000 in compensation to 62,000 Japanese Americans interned during World War II because of its impact on the budget. Ros-Lehtinen had one thought: "What if it happened to the Cubans?" After she voted for compensation, she admitted she was "in the GOP doghouse a little bit."[70] Ros-Lehtinen was able to balance a strong support for the Republican Party with a record for voting based on her experiences as a Cuban American. She was reelected eleven times as the Representative of the 18th district, and in 2012 was elected to represent the newly created 27th district.

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[69] Luis Feldstein Soto, "It's Ros-Lehtinen, 53-47%," *Miami Herald*, August 30, 1989.
[70] Liz Balmaseda, "Ileana Ros-Lehtinen Charges the Hill," *Miami Herald*, November 19, 1989.

Another Cuban American followed in Ros-Lehtinen's footsteps and became a member of the House of Representatives in this time period. Lincoln Díaz-Balart was a 35 year old lawyer and member of the Florida House of Representatives when, in 1989, he resigned his post as a Florida State Representative to run for the seat that Ros-Lehtinen's election to Congress had made available. Republican Díaz-Balart, the heavy favorite, defeated Gene Flinn by a margin of five-to-one.[71] Three years later, Díaz-Balart placed a bid to represent Florida's newly created 21st district in the U.S. House of Representatives. Díaz-Balart easily defeated his opponent, State Senator Javier Souto, when he obtained 69% of the vote in the election that made him the second Cuban American to be elected to Congress. In advance of his arrival in Congress, Díaz-Balart made it clear that his loyalty was to his community before his party, stating that he was a supporter of President George Bush, but not of all his policies. He stated that he would use his newfound position to hasten the liberation of his homeland.[72]

The election of Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Lincoln Díaz-Balart helped solidify an association of the Cuban American community with the Republican Party at a local and national level. This conflation was largely driven by the work of the Cuban American National Foundation, which openly worked to maintain strong ties with Reagan and his successor George Bush. When the Foundation sought Bush's presence in one of their events, Deputy Director of Media Relations for the Office of Presidential Communications, Barrie Tron, contacted the Republican National Committee's Hispanic Outreach Director who informed him that CANF was "an influential group

[71] Pedro Sevcec and Lizette Muñiz, "Ganan Díaz-Balart Y De Grandy por gran margen," *El Nuevo Herald*, August 10, 1989.
[72] Cynthia Corzo, "Díaz-Balart listo a transladar su energía a la capital federal," *El Nuevo Herald*, September 20, 1992.

that is very interested in the Republican Party."[73] The Cuban American National Foundation, however, did not speak for all Cuban Americans and their interest did not lie exclusively with the Republican Party. CANF made strategic alliances with members of both major political parties as was politically expedient for their long term goals. During the 1980s and early 1990s, Reagan's single-minded anti-communism and the election of his Vice President presented an ideologically convenient and politically powerful alliance for the Foundation.

Other factors contributed to the strong public association of the Cuban American electorate with the GOP. The community's rocky history with the Democratic Party had set the stage for this public association. Reagan's open antagonism of international communism set him at a stark contrast with previous democratic administrations that members of the Cuban American community had seen as weak. Even as Regan faced the most significant public setback of his presidency, the Iran-Contra scandal, many Cuban Americans expressed their strong support of the President. One 64-year-old exile fashioned and distributed flyers reading "Support Reagan Against Betrayal," and when asked about them by reporters he stated that it hurt him to see the Democrats and the media "do this to the best president this country has ever had." In the midst of the scandal, thousands of Cuban Americans and Nicaraguan exiles flocked to the Dade County auditorium to listen to White House communications director Pat Buchanan defend the President, Vice Admiral John Poindexter, and Lt. Colonel Oliver North. Supporters within the auditorium held signs that read "We follow you Reagan," "We love freedom, we fight Communism," and "100 percent with Reagan." As Buchanan blamed Reagan's political opponents for fanning the flames of the scandal, he told an excited crowd that

[73] Barrie Tron to K.T., May 8, 1989, Folder—Cuban American National Foundation [OA-ID 01907-129], Barrie Tron Files, White House Office of Public Affairs, Bush Library.

Miami's Cuban American community had "always been in the vanguard of the Reagan revolution."[74]

The link between the GOP and the Cuban American community in South Florida was further solidified when Carlos Salmán assumed the presidency of the Republican Party in Dade County. Salmán, a Cuban born banker, had three initial goals in taking over Dade's GOP: to keep the party united, to grow the party's ranks in the area and increase Cuban American participation in elections, and to obtain the necessary funds to keep the Party's county offices open. Salmán was particularly proud of the rapid growth of the GOP in Dade County in recent years. He noted that between 1980 and 1984, 11,914 people had registered as Republicans in the county, compared to the 87,620 registrations between January of 1984 and July of 1987. While he felt that he had played a part in increasing registrations, Salmán credited "a little old man named Ronald Reagan" who had boosted the Republican Party's popularity throughout the country and especially in Dade County among the Cuban community. While the Democratic leadership and others had "tried to create a negative opinion with regards to the Reagan administration," this had not dampened the enthusiasm of Cuban American voters. Salmán had reason to be confident about the Cuban support for the Republican Party. July of 1988 saw 905 voter registrations by Cuban Americans: 703 registered as Republicans, 102 registered as Democrats, and 72 registered as independents. Of the 172,753 Hispanic registered voters in the county, 117,169 were registered Republicans and 41,085 were registered Democrats.[75]

These new demographics were significantly changing the electoral landscape in Dade County and in South Florida. Veteran Congressman Dante Fascell had long made a name for

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[74] Luisa Yanez, "Exiles Here Show Support for President," *The Miami News*, December 9, 1986.
[75] Gladys Nieves, "Salmán: Orgulloso de Ser Republicano," El Nuevo Herald, August 13, 1988.

himself as an ally of the Cuban community. Fascell was seen as an ally by anti-communist Cubans in the United States. In the campaign for the 1984 election, Jorge Mas Canosa wrote a letter supporting Fascell's candidacy, noting that the long-serving Democrat had opposed Castro for two and a half decades. He called Fascell an enthusiastic proponent of the economic embargo against Cuba and "the principal sponsor, in the House of Representatives, of Radio Martí." These reasons made Mas Canosa ask his fellow Cubans to support Fascell so he could continue to fight for a Cuba free of Castro and of communism.[76] The Free Cuba PAC also spent thousands of dollars to place newspaper ads on behalf of Fascell in the *Miami Herald* and *Diaro Las Americas* on the eve of the 1990 election.[77] While Fascell had the support of several key Cuban Americans, the Florida Democratic Party was concerned about the Cuban American community's perception of the Party. The State Party Chairman, Charles A. Whitehead, wrote a letter to Democratic office holders outlining a program to attempt to "alter the misconception within the Cuban community, which has been created by the Republican Party, that Democratic officeholders do not represent their interests."[78]

Even as support for the Republican Party in Dade was rising, the Cuban American community's rocky history with the Democratic Party continued at the local and state levels. This was particularly significant in 1991 when the state's Democratic Governor Lawton Chiles was engaged in a very public feud with Charles Whitehead's successor as State Chairman, Simon Ferro. Ferro, a Cuban-born lawyer from Miami, ran into problems in Tallahassee when Chiles

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[76] Jorge Mas Canosa, open letter, October 10, 1984, Folder 665, Box 1863, Dante B. Fascell Congressional Papers, 1955-1993, University of Miami Special Collections, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL (Hereafter cited as DBF Papers).
[77] L.N. to Dante B. Fascell, May 5, 1992, Folder 845, Box 1879, DBF Papers
[78] Charles A. Whitehead to Bob Graham, Lawton Chiles, Claude Pepper, Dante Fascell, et. Al, July 16, 1985, Folder 6, Box 1867, DBF Papers.

became dissatisfied with his handling of the party.[79] The disagreements between the two men led to a meeting in late June at which Chiles made it clear he wanted Ferro to resign before he faced the embarrassment of being forced out. Ferro, however, did not want to resign and he publically stated that Chiles did not have the votes to oust him from the Party's leadership. Some of the state's Cuban American Democrats were angered by Chiles's actions, which they believed stemmed from concerns of a Cuban takeover of the state. "We don't want to run the state," said Coalition of Cuban American Democrats of Florida president Osvaldo Soto, "we want to help him." Others simply stated that they were "outraged."[80] Political commentators in the state warned that even if Chiles managed to oust Ferro, the political cost for Democrats in Dade County would be enormous. "Unless the governor can supplant Ferro with another Hispanic, the ouster will be interpreted in ethnic terms, rightly or wrongly," wrote *Herald* Political Editor Tom Fielder.[81] The feud would drag on for months until Chiles's Lieutenant Governor, Buddy MacKay, told the press in December that the split between the two Democratic leaders had been resolved.[82] This came, however, after the months of conflict and after Chiles publicly refused to attend the State Democratic Convention until the week before the event.[83]

Dade County's political environment was changing. The increased presence of the Cuban American community as part of the electorate and a strong identification with the Republican Party were fundamentally altering the nature of what had been a solid Democratic stronghold. While these changes brought challenges to the Democratic Party in Dade County and in Florida, they did not take the party out of contention entirely. The support of the Cuban

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[79] Tom Fielder, "The Chiles-Ferro Scrap Will Leave Lasting Wounds," *Miami Herald*, June 30, 1991.
[80] Tim Nickens, "Democrats Seek Quiet End to Fight," *Miami Herald*, June 28, 1991.
[81] Tom Fielder, "The Chiles-Ferro Scrap Will Leave Lasting Wounds," *Miami Herald*, June 30, 1991.
[82] John C. Van Gleson, "Chiles, Ferro Ready to Mend Differences," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 5, 1991.
[83] John C. Van Gleson, "Delegates Cheer Unity of Chiles and Ferro," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 16, 1991

American lobby and increasingly powerful Cuban American electorate could be obtained by embracing attractive policy positions. The power of the lobby, the electorate, and of Cuban American politicians had limits. A series of events in the waning years of the Cold War would show that maintaining influence in the American political system and serving the Cuban American constituency simultaneously would not always be possible.

The sometimes opposing pulls on powerful Cuban Americans from their community and from the United States government made it difficult to navigate the use of the power they had accrued. This was particularly true when different sectors of the Cuban American community had divergent aims and ideas of how to achieve those aims. One such divergence resulted in the uprisings at the federal detention centers at Oakville, Louisiana and Atlanta, Georgia. The problem for powerful Cubans Americans and the Cuban American lobby was that the general reaction to the marielitos and the specific reaction to those Cubans who were arrested in the United States made many ordinary Cuban Americans question whether the detainees were worth fighting for or if they were even a part of their community. The growing power of the Cuban American community had been built on economic achievement and on a positive view of the Cuban exiles. After the public relations challenge of Mariel, an increasing concern with optics made the idea of risking power, influence, and image for a group of exiles who had been convicted of crimes in the United States seem like a losing proposition.

The bulk of the exiled Cubans who wound up detained in Oakdale and Atlanta had faced the challenges of a post-Mariel Miami in which they had little or no support and in which crime appeared to many to be the most viable option for survival. While some Cuban exiles who were

arrested and convicted of crimes were violent offenders, many others were arrested because of non-violent offenses including working as sometimes unwitting drug mules for the city's thriving drug trade. In the same way the arrival of the marielitos had overwhelmed the city's economy and resources, the thousands of arrests that stemmed from an economy of desperation overwhelmed the legal system. Most of the Cuban defendants had no knowledge of the American legal system and had no resources with which to secure legal representation. The sheer number of arrests also served to overwhelm the public defender system in South Florida. The State Attorney for Dade County, Janet Reno, sought to remove the blockages in the system by offering these offenders plea bargains with reduced sentences for their crimes. For defendants facing stiff penalties related to drug trafficking, the prospect of serving shortened sentences of one, two, or three years was far more attractive. The defendants were not advised, however, that upon completion of their sentences they would be immediately detained by Immigration and Naturalization Services for having violated the terms of their status as parolees.[84]

The exiles found themselves placed in indefinite detention at federal facilities run by the Bureau of Prisons. Soon after the end of the boatlift, when federal authorities were attempting to find placement for those Fort Chaffee residents who might not receive sponsorship, it was suggested that 800 to 1000 "hostile and anti-social Cubans" with no criminal history be placed at the Atlanta Penitentiary. There was already an established population of 1,761 convicted Cuban entrants at the facility. The Atlanta Penitentiary was already overcrowded, having been designed with a capacity of 1,500 and housing 2,069 inmates at the time of the suggestion. The Bureau of Prisons also objected to this placement on legal grounds, noting that there was

[84] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.

"questionable, if any, legal authority to hold those with anti-social personalities in a federal prison, co-mingled with those who have been convicted."[85] Given the existing overcrowding, the addition of almost one thousand more Cuban entrants on shaky legal grounds would be extremely problematic. There were already those who objected to the existing Cuban population in Atlanta. The Cuban American Bar Association, for example, called for the release of any entrant not charged with a crime not only in Atlanta, but also at Fort Chaffee.[86]

The Catholic Church also advocated for the detainees, charging that many of those already detained in Atlanta were put there by mistake during the Mariel screening process. They decried the fact that the Attorney General of the United States had testified before congress in July of 1981 and had "failed to differentiate among those being held in the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary when he described them all as criminals." Church volunteers had identified some 400 of the detainees as mentally ill or intellectually challenged. These detainees would remain wards of the U.S. government for the rest of their lives unless the Cuban government could be persuaded to accept their return. After the removal of these 400, church workers estimated that some 600 of those remaining would pose a threat to the community if released. The remaining 800 detainees were "young men who are not guilty of anything that would merit long term imprisonment in the United States." To delay their release meant delaying the incorporation of these men into society. "We cannot be indifferent to a serious violation of basic human rights which, though it had its origins in the actions of the government of Cuba, has too long been perpetuated by our own government," concluded a statement issued by Edward

[85] Norman A. Carlson to David Hiller, April 9, 1981, Folder—Justice, Dept. of [2], Box 25, Subject File, Records of the Cuban-Haitian Task Force, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA (hereafter cited as Carter Library).
[86] Jay Ducassi, "Exigen Libertad para refugiados," *El Miami Herald*, July 18, 1981.

McCarthy, the Archbishop of Miami, Auxiliary Bishop Agustin Roman, and Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh.[87]

The Catholic Church continued to advocate for the release of the Cuban exiles who had taken plea deals and found themselves in indefinite detention after serving their sentences. Being considered excludable aliens by the federal government meant that the Cuban exiles were to be returned to their country of origin. Violation of their parole made it so they were, legally speaking, no longer in the country and no longer entitled to constitutional rights in the period in which they waited repatriation. This was not easy. The Cuban government did not want to see any of the Mariel boatlift exiles returned. In the years after the boatlift, several rounds of negotiations led to potential agreements regarding the return of the detainees. A 1984 agreement resulted in a list of prisoners that the Cuban government would accept if repatriated. As an advocate for the detainees pointed out, however, the list of those detainees to be deported did not include violent offenders, which the Cuban government did not want to receive. Instead it was the non-violent offenders who would be sent back to the country they had fled. "We were deporting those who least deserved to be deported," said Cuban American attorney Rafael Peñalver. The agreement would not be implemented as expected because the launch of Radio Martí caused the Cuban government to withdraw from the accord and it once again made the detainees' stay in federal facilities indefinite.[88]

As the detainees and their families awaited some definitive news regarding the final fate of the men who had already served their sentences, the problem remained largely unknown

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[87] Edward A. McCarthy, Agustin Roman, and Bryan O. Walsh, "Cuban Detainees in Atlanta," August 19, 1981, Folder—Cuban Detainees in Atlanta, 19 Aug. 1981, Box 40, Series III, Bryan O. Walsh Papers, Barry University, Miami, FL (hereafter cited as Walsh Papers).

[88] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.

even among the Cuban American community. Many of those Cuban Americans who were aware of the detentions did not consider them a problem, as they were more concerned with the impact of these men and their convictions on the image of Cuban Americans. Rafael Peñalver was, in the mid-1980s, chairman of the Florida Commission of Hispanic Affairs. The Commission had been created by the Florida State Legislature in 1978 to represent the interest of the Hispanic community in the state. Each month, the Commission would meet in a different city in Florida and hold public hearings where the state's Hispanic residents could voice complaints that the Commission, in turn, could convey to the Governor's office. Peñalver's involvement with the detainees began after a group of families came to petition on behalf of their detained relatives in Tallahassee. The families making the petition requested the Commission meet at the prison in Tallahassee so the detainees could plead their case. Peñalver and the other Commission members were skeptical, believing that the families were petitioning for the violent offenders that Castro had included in the boatlift. Regardless, the Commission set a date for a hearing in Tallahassee.[89]

Peñalver, as chairman of the Commission was obligated to go to the meetings, but when he arrived in Tallahassee he learned that he was the only member of the commission that came to the hearing. Once there the detainees and their families pleaded their case, explaining that they had already served their sentences and had been held in indefinite detention for up to 3 years after the end of those sentences. Peñalver thought the detainees and their families seemed to be decent people, not hardened criminals, but he could not believe that the indefinite detention being described could actually be taking place. The detainees told Peñalver that he could verify everything they were telling him and that he should speak to Bishop Roman

[89] *Ibid*.

in Miami, the one advocate that had come to their aid thus far. Peñalver had family friends put him in touch with Roman, who verified what the detainees had told him. The two men then forged a partnership to advocate for the detainees.[90]

Roman and Peñalver began a campaign on behalf of the detainees, arguing that indefinite detention was both a violation of the U.S. Constitution and a violation of basic human rights. Roman asked Peñalver to write a legal brief concerning the problem of indefinite detention and in late 1986 he drafted pastoral letter on behalf of Roman and the two other Cuban born Bishops, Eduardo Boza-Masvidal and Enrique San Pedro. The bishops were unable to change the federal government's policies, but their advocacy helped strengthen Roman's identity as an advocate with the detainees.[91] In November of 1987, the U.S. government announced it had reached a new immigration pact with Cuba that could result in the arrival of between 23,000 and 25,000 Cuban immigrants to American shores each year. Part of the accord included continued talks for the deportation of 3,700 ex-felons being detained by the INS and 3,500 serving prison sentences.[92] The accords included a reinstatement of parts of the failed 1984 agreement, specifically the list of detainees that the Cuban government was willing to accept if repatriated. Upon learning that extraditions to Cuba were imminent, the Cuban detainees at the Federal Detention Center in Oakdale rioted and took hostages. Three days later, the detainees at the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta followed suit.[93]

"They are saying they would rather die than go to Cuba," relayed Maria Garcia, wife of an Atlanta detainee, to other Cuban families. Garcia was listening to the police frequency on a

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[90] *Ibid*.
[91] *Ibid*.
[92] Tina Montalvo, "Influx Could Strain Services," *Miami Herald*, November 22, 1987.
[93] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.

walkie-talkie while standing outside the penitentiary. When rumors arose that the police might take the Penitentiary by force, the families of the detainees sought out the aid of one of the few individuals to have championed their cause: Georgia congressman and Civil Rights Movement veteran John Lewis. Lewis, for his part, asked law enforcement officials to be allowed to enter the penitentiary in order to negotiate an end to the standoff. Lewis's request was denied, declared too dangerous.[94] Federal authorities attempted to conduct negotiations themselves, but they were unable to come to terms with the rioters. Cuban American leaders grew increasingly anxious as the standoffs dragged on, exclaiming that their potential as negotiators was being ignored. Speaking at a press conference held by Facts About Cuban Exiles, banker Carlos Arboleya complained that top officials in the Reagan administration were all but ignoring the eager Cuban Americans who wanted to help end the hostage situations. Jorge Mas Canosa stated that he was in touch with Attorney General Edwin Meese, but criticized the federal government's handling of the crisis and their hesitancy to allow for judicial reviews on a case-by-case basis as the detainees were demanding. Others were concerned about the impact on their community as a whole. Antonio Varona, the head of the Junta Patriotica Cubana warned that supporting the rioters was dangerous because of "public American opinion, which could fall upon all of us."[95]

Even as prominent Cuban Americans were growing increasingly impatient, the Reagan administration had already reached out to Bishop Roman and Peñalver. The federal government was eager to end the crisis, not just because of the potential for violence and loss

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[94] Fred Grimm, "Desperate Wives Pray for Mercy," *Miami Herald*, November 24, 1987.
[95] Luis Feldstein Soto and Tina Montalvo, "'I'm going to Atlanta,' Bishop Says," *Miami Herald*, November 26, 1987.

of life, but because of an impending state visit by Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev.[96] The day after the Oakdale riot, the detainees had requested that Roman be the one to negotiate on their behalf, so the bishop was essential to achieving this goal. The bishop had Peñalver negotiate terms with the Justice Department before they would go anywhere near either facility. Roman was ready to travel up to Atlanta the Monday after the riots, but the trip was postponed when the Justice Department refused to provide written guarantees that the detainees would receive individual reviews before the courts. The detainees and their advocates wanted to ensure each man would get a hearing to determine if they would remain in the country instead of being deported as a group. As phone negotiations between Peñalver and the Justice Department continued, the refusal to allow for the requested review system kept Roman from becoming involved. "I cannot trick the prisoners—or anyone," said Bishop Roman.[97]

Peñalver and Roman, along with Carlos Arboleya, travelled to Washington, D.C. to continue their negotiations with the federal government at a meeting with Attorney General Meese. Peñalver sought to secure the process of individual review, to differentiate between violent and non-violent offenders, and to stop the practice of indefinite detention. Meese explained to the bishop and his lawyer that the detainees were not, legally speaking, in the country. He used the metaphor of a chain-link fence being erected around the country and he told the bishop to imagine that the detainees were on the other side; they had not entered the country and therefore had no rights. "If they are not in the country," Roman asked Meese, "then how have they taken over two of your largest federal penitentiaries?" The pair's entrenched advocacy of the detainees enraged Meese, who asked how a man of the cloth could

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[96] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[97] Luis Feldstein Soto and Tina Montalvo, "'I'm going to Atlanta,' Bishop Says," *Miami Herald*, November 26, 1987.

allow his lawyer to blackmail the federal government. Roman denied there was any blackmail happening, but he would not allow himself or Peñalver to be used. "What you are suggesting," he told Meese, "is to use the Church and use an attorney to solve the problem that you yourselves created."[98]

The meeting in Washington did not yield an agreement between the federal government and Bishop Roman. Roman and Peñalver continued to negotiate with a team from the federal government who travelled down to Miami. The federal government agreed to the concept of individual review and flew the bishop and his lawyer to England Air Force base in Alexandria, LA to sort out the details of what they could offer the detainees. After a long negotiation, Roman and Peñalver made their dramatic entrance at Oakdale, resolving the situation.[99] When they travelled to Atlanta, they were met with greater skepticism from the detainees, noting that the Oakdale pact was unacceptable as a solution to the Atlanta situation.[100] The bishop managed to negotiate terms with the Atlanta detainees as well, ending what the *Miami Herald* called "the longest prison uprising in American history" shortly after 1 a.m. on December 4, 1987. The crisis that once promised to end only in carnage ended instead in a crowd of detainees crowding the roof of the penitentiary's hospital, celebrating with music and dancing as Bishop Roman entered the building.[101] Roman and Peñalver remained involved with the detainees for years to come. Peñalver created an organization named Due Process, Inc., which had teams of volunteer lawyers and law students who travelled to the remote

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[98] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[99] *Ibid*.
[100] Celia W. Dugger and Fred Grimm, "Inmate Talks Make Progress, but Oakdale Pact Draws Scorn," *Miami Herald*, December 2, 1987.
[101] Fred Grimm, Mirta Ojito, and Martin Merzer, "Inmates End Siege," *Miami Herald*, December 4, 1987.

locations where the Cuban detainees had been dispersed to prevent another uprising. Despite a slow case review process, nearly 80% of the detainees were eventually released.[102]

The bloodless end of the crisis brought a sense of relief to the streets of Little Havana and, at least for a moment, a sense of unity. "Now we all feel proud when we see a *marielito* waving a Cuban flag from the roof of the Atlanta prison," said a Cuban American who had worked for the detainees. Others, like Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, doubted the harmony in the community would last, but suggested it was comforting to know that when unity was needed it could exist.[103] Others suggested that this temporary union showed the Cuban American community's new maturity. Guillermo Martinez wrote an opinion piece in the *Herald* where he stated that the resolution showed that the community had come of age. Martinez was particularly complimentary of men like Peñalver and Arboleya who had supported Roman's effort to resolve the crisis. Arboleya's FACE had gone beyond its original mission of improving the Cuban American community's image and had "played a crucial role in helping to prevent that image from deteriorating."[104]

According to Peñalver, the members of Facts About Cuban Exiles wanted the federal government to make an agreement with Roman in order for the bishop to end the standoffs. The actions of other members of the Cuban American community, however, did not show the sense of unity that was so publicly celebrated following the resolution of the crisis. While Roman and Peñalver negotiated with the federal government over the concept of individual review, federal authorities brought pressure on the Cuban American community, which, in turn, brought pressure on Roman and Peñalver to give the federal government the swift end to the

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[102] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[103] Andres Viglucci, "Ordeal Unites Cuban Community," *Miami Herald*, December 5, 1987.
[104] Guillermo Martinez, "Cuban Community Has Come of Age," *Miami Herald*, December 8, 1987.

crisis it wanted.[105] Given the recalcitrance of the bishop and the attorney, the federal government attempted to bring in other Cuban American negotiators including Jorge Mas Canosa and Xavier Suarez. Before Roman brought an end to the Oakdale crisis, the FBI attempted to conclude the Atlanta standoff by teaming an FBI negotiator with two former political prisoners and Mas Canosa to negotiate with the prisoners. The detainees refused the deal even after 15 high profile Cubans including Xavier Suarez, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Antonio de Varona, and Huber Matos attempted to visit the detainees to convince them to release the hostages.[106] While all parties wanted to conclude the hostage situations before any fatalities occurred, some members of the Cuban American community were far more interested in pleasing the federal government than in assuring the rights of the detainees. Peñalver recalls that the detainees understood this well, leading to their distrust of the Cuban American National Foundation. "They wanted to impress the American government that they were able to deliver," he says of CANF, "and by impressing the American government that they were able to deliver, they lost their constituency."[107]

Peñalver was far from the only voice in the Cuban community critical of the Cuban American National Foundation and Jorge Mas Canosa. He was joined by many critics from without. Mas Canosa held that many of his critics among those outside of the Cuban community sought to create a false impression of the community at large. He believed that "part of the Anglo culture," both in Miami and throughout the country, wanted to create the concept that the Cubans were "haters."[108] Just weeks before the detainees rioted in Oakdale and Atlanta, the Cuban American National Foundation took aim at what would become one of

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[105] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[106] Rodrigo Lazo and Justing Gillis, Miamians Rebuffed in Atlanta," *Miami Herald*, November 28, 1987.
[107] Rafael Peñalver. Interview with author. Digital recording. Coral Gables, Florida, March 14, 2013.
[108] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.

Mas Canosa's most frequent targets: the *Miami Herald*. The Foundation, dissatisfied with the newspaper's editorial positions, took out a full page advertisement in the pages of the *Herald* that attacked the newspaper's attitudes toward the Cuban American community. "The *Miami Herald* is aggressive in its ignorance of our people," declared the ad, "it refuses to understand that Cuban Americans see the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy as a personal, ever-present struggle."[109] The *Herald* was not simply an institution that failed to see eye-to-eye with the Cuban American community, but it was purposefully hostile.

In early November, the *Herald* ran an opinion piece by Miguel Gonzalez-Pando, a Bay of Pigs veteran and the director of the Division of Latino Studies at Florida International University, which suggested that the confrontation between CANF and Miami's largest newspaper was necessary. The conflict needed to be understood "within the context of a steady deterioration in the mutual perspectives of the single most-influential institution in this growing and prosperous city, and the group most responsible for such growth and prosperity." Gonzalez-Pando admitted that the *Herald* needed to serve a larger, multicultural community and mission, and that it was not at the service of the Cuban community alone. The *Herald*, however, had failed the maturing Cuban community, and CANF had merely expressed the larger frustrations of the community over the newspaper's lack of sensitivity. The basis of this allegation could not be disputed, but the Cuban community did not need to give itself over to paranoia. "It seems difficult to conclude that The *Herald's* failure is the result of a conscious conspiracy against Cubans—as it is usually characterized in the Spanish media—rather than merely the consequence of unfortunate errors of omission and a lack of real understanding," Gonzalez-Pando wrote. The Cuban academic sided with the Foundation and argued that the newspaper

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[109] Alex Stepick, Guillermo Grenier, et al., *This Land is Our Land: Immigrants and Power in Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 47.

needed to catch up to the changing reality of the community. The Cuban American community, in turn, was encouraged, in the vaguest of terms, to embrace the American tradition of compromise. The conflict between CANF and the *Herald* had been necessary to create a new relationship.[110]

The *Herald* attempted to engage Dade's Hispanic community in a new way by rebranding its Spanish edition, *El Herald*, as *El Nuevo Herald* that same month. Staff changes and a greater editorial independence for *El Nuevo Herald* did not satisfy many Cubans, including Mas Canosa. The CANF chairman's conflicts with Miami's largest newspaper continued as the global Cold War came to an end and circumstances suggested that the Cuban exile would soon follow suit. Many in Miami's Cuban American community were convinced that the dissolution of the Soviet Union meant that Fidel Castro and the revolutionary regime would soon be done away with. In May of 1992, Jorge Mas Canosa made a prediction that Castro would fall within a year or two.[111] With Castro's international support system disintegrating, CANF and its allies sought to strengthen economic restrictions on Cuba, hastening the end of Cuba's revolutionary regime. A new bill, entitled the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, was introduced by New Jersey Congressman Robert Torricelli. "The usually liberal congressman suddenly found himself needing the support of north Jersey's conservative Cuban-exile community," reported *Esquire*, and "suddenly he got the notion to tighten the embargo the U.S. had declared against Cuba twenty-nine years ago." The bill was meant to restrict trade with Cuba by the subsidiaries of American corporations based abroad, to prevent American firms from obtaining tax deductions for expenses related to subsidiary trade with Cuba, and to restrict foreign ships traveling to Cuba

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[110] Miguel Gonzalez-Pando, "Herald, Cuban Groups: Necessary Confrontation," *Miami Herald*, November 4, 1987.
[111] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.

for trade from stopping at U.S. ports. *Esquire* was less than complimentary toward the Torricelli bill, calling it "a near reduction ad absurdum of the United States' historic big-stick-no-carrot policy toward Cuba." The Department of State was another strong opponent of the bill, calling it "self-destructive" and noting the ban on subsidiary trade would provoke the allies of the United States. In due course, the British and Canadian governments issued strong objections and the European Economic Community formally stated that it would not accept "the extraterritorial extension of U.S. jurisdiction" and that the bill went against international law. [112]

During the discussion of the Torricelli Bill, Jorge Mas Canosa once again engaged in battle with the *Miami Herald*. In January of 1992, the *Herald* ran an editorial opposing the bill. The editorial admitted that Robert Torricelli had built a reputation as a leader on Latin American issues, but it also reminded readers that President George Bush had vetoed similar legislation in 1990 because it would harm relations with trading partners like Canada. The newspaper called for Congress to defeat the Torricelli bill. "Making the embargo air-tight will not promote democracy or liberty in Cuba, but it could promote chaos and catastrophic violence," a *Herald* editorial cautioned. The editorial board warned that such a tightening could "conceivably worsen the Cuban people's deteriorating living conditions while offering Mr. Castro rhetorical ammunition for harsher repressive measures and for his denunciations of U.S. 'conspiracies' against his regime." At best, the editorial board speculated, the bill would earn Torricelli the support of the Cuban American community. The most sensible policy that Washington could adopt toward Cuba was to simply leave things as they were. To exert additional pressure on the

[112] Gaeton Fonzi, "Who is Jorge Mas Canosa?," *Esquire*, January 1993, 88.

Cuban government ran the risk of making the United States' Cuba policy completely ineffective.[113]

Mas Canosa, in turn, denounced the *Herald* for "manipulating information like Granma." The CANF chairman took to Cuban radio to denounce the newspaper and its leadership. He claimed that the *Herald* had conducted a continuous and systematic campaign against Cuban Americans and he called on the newspaper's leadership to resign.[114] The same day the *Herald* published the editorial against the Torricelli bill, *El Nuevo Herald* published a column by assistant city editor Andres Reynaldo that criticized exile leaders who espoused violence against the Castro regime but expected others to carry out the behaviors they advocated. Reynaldo singled out Armando Perez-Roura, general manager and commentator for Radio Mambi, who was leading a petition drive asking President Bush to grant the exile community the right to use force against Castro's Cuba. Mas Canosa took this as a combined assault on both the Cuban American community's allies and the community itself. "Just like *The Miami Herald* attacks Congressman Robert Torricelli, a friend of the Cubans, it also attacks Cubans and institutions like Armando Perez-Roura," Mas Canosa charged. The *Herald* called the attacks on itself and its sister publication "sad and painful and unfair." Writers Alfonso Chardy and Cynthia Corzo reiterated that the newspapers had "treated the news about Cuba and the Cuban-American community in exile with respect and integrity and sensitivity." They acknowledged that the *Herald* was not perfect, but stated that when they had made mistakes they had been willing to correct them. While the newspaper had sought diverse perspectives in its news columns, it had given regular coverage to human rights violations and the situation on the island. "On the editorial pages of

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[113] "Bad Strategy on Cuba," editorial, *Miami Herald*, January 18, 1992.
[114] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.

*The Herald*," they went on, "where our own opinion appears, our position in support of a free Cuba has been unequivocal."[115]

Mas Canosa was not impressed. He enlisted the aid of the right-leaning Inter-American Press Association, which published a negative report on the *Herald's* practices. Mas Canosa and other like-minded Cubans followed up on these attacks by purchasing advertising space on the side of buses that read in English or in Spanish "I don't believe in The Herald/Yo no creo en El Herald." [116] Mas Canosa acknowledged these actions, but denied having been part of the larger campaign against the *Herald* and its staff which accompanied them. Letter writing campaigns to advertisers were organized by incensed members of the community. The newspaper's vending machines were smeared with feces and staffers received death threats. During this campaign, the *Herald's* publisher David Lawrence began to fear he would be the victim of a bombing and began using a remote control device to start his car each morning.[117] In March, Lawrence wrote a piece entitled "No, Mr. Mas, Intimidation Won't Work." He had worked for seven newspapers throughout his career, but he had never seen anything like the situation he had experienced over the previous two months. The *Herald*, however, would not surrender to Mas Canosa's "bullying." "This is a guy hellbent on control," Lawrence wrote. The newspaper would welcome and convey Mas Canosa's opinion, but never his opinion alone. "All the billboards in the Americas, all the national TV that he can buy, all the analysts whom he can strong-arm, all the

[115] Alfonso Chardy and Cynthia Corzo, "Cuban Exiles Leader Says Papers Biased," *Miami Herald*, January 21, 1992.
[116] Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," April 11, 1996.
[117] Stepick, Grenier, et al., *This Land is Our Land*, 49.

huffing and bluster, still won't give him control of this newspaper. Ever," Lawrence wrote defiantly.[118]

The Torricelli Bill remained a point of contention throughout 1992 as the country headed into a particularly contested presidential election. President Bush, following the suggestions of the State Department, initially opposed the Torricelli Bill. In April, Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton visited Miami and announced that he was backing the proposed legislation. On that day, Clinton received more than $275,000 in campaign contributions from Hispanic donors. The following month, on Cuban Independence Day, Clinton returned to Miami and was given $100,000 by four Cuban American businessmen. In response to Clinton's endorsement of the bill, President Bush stated that he would use an executive order to implement a new policy that would prohibit vessels that engaged in trade with Cuban from coming into U.S. ports. The State Department remained quiet, but one official admitted off the record that the Department was "bending over on this and taking it." With the stated and implicit support of both of the leading presidential candidates, the bill easily passed both the Senate and the House.[119]

"It's a bad day in Havana," gushed Robert Torricelli after the passage of the Cuban Democracy Act in the House and the Senate. The *Herald*, however, called attention to the fact that "for some, the significance of the Cuban Democracy Act… was its testament to the ability and clout of the Cuban American National Foundation."[120] The Cold War had ended with the fall of the Soviet Union, but CANF had significant clout in American politics still. The Free Cuba PAC

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[118] David Lawrence Jr., "No, Mr. Mas, Intimidation Won't Work," *Miami Herald*, March 22, 1992.
[119] Gaeton Fonzi, "Who is Jorge Mas Canosa?," *Esquire*, January 1993, 88.
[120] Christopher Marquis, "Embargo Bill's Success Testifies to Exiles' Clout," *Miami Herald*, September 28, 1992.

had donated more than $1,000,000 to congressional candidates in the previous decade and it was understood that any vote against an anti-Castro policy carried with it the potential danger of being painted as being soft on communism. "In a small corner of the Western Hemisphere, the Cold War endures," claimed another *Herald* story. At that moment, the political capital of Mas Canosa and CANF was reaching a high water mark. Even a previous critic of Mas Canosa's, Wayne Smith, had to admit that the courtship of Bill Clinton had been "a masterful job."[121] The Foundation's relationship with Clinton would yield them a smooth transition from being associated with the Republican Party to a significant relationship with the Democratic contender. The contact between Clinton and CANF was not without its controversy among many Cuban Americans. Republican loyalists in the community claimed that meetings between Mas Canosa and Governor Clinton showed "a lack of principle, a lack of loyalty, a negative image," and that the CANF chairman wanted "to be with God and with the devil." The Foundation, however, valued continued influence over ideological purity or Party association. "Your statements on Cuba have demonstrated to us here in Miami, as well as to the entire Cuban-American community throughout the United States," read a Foundation statement following a meeting between the candidate and Mas Canosa, "that we need not fear a Bill Clinton administration."[122]

While George Bush still won the state of Florida, he did so by a much smaller margin than when he faced Michael Dukakis in 1988. Clinton managed to make inroads into the Cuban American community in 1992 and in 1996, when he gained as much as 40% of the community's

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[121] Peter Slevin, "Washington Gives Cuban Foundation Clout, Legitimacy," *Miami Herald*, October 11, 1992.
[122] Tom Fielder and Ivan Roman, "Clinton-Mas Meeting Shocks Cuban Miami," *Miami Herald*, October 29, 1992.

vote.[123] Mas Canosa's relationship with Clinton allowed the Cuban American National Foundation continued access after the Republican Party lost the White House. Some critics of the CANF chairman saw this relationship as detrimental to Clinton and to American policy. One contentious magazine profile labelled the president Mas Canosa's "indulgent patron," and suggested that as a candidate Clinton had entered in a "Faustian deal" in an effort to win the state of Florida.[124] Clinton's embrace of harsher policy against Castro's Cuba, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of subsidies to the island, the disappearance of Cuba's Eastern European trading partners, and the passage of the Torricelli bill made the goals of the Cuban American National Foundation and like-minded Cuban Americans seem within reach. The period between 1991 and 1996, euphemistically called the *período especial* by Castro's government, saw a precipitous economic decline. In the first three years of this period, the Cuban economy declined by 35% of GDP.[125]

This sharp economic decline exacerbated an immigration trend that began in the mid-1980s. Starting in 1985, desperate Cubans began attempting the dangerous crossing of the Florida Straits in *balsas*, makeshift rafts constructed of tires and other materials available to them. The crossing was an incredibly dangerous endeavor during which the would-be refugees risked drowning, starvation, dehydration, or being preyed upon by sharks. Between 1985 and 1993 some 6,000 *balseros* managed to safely reach the United States on these makeshift vessels. The situation became all the more dire in the summer of 1994 as the Cuban economy declined and Castro once again used this migration impulse as a pressure release valve on Cuban society. Castro ordered the Cuban Coast Guard not to stop any balseros they found attempting

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[123] Stepick, Grenier, et al., *This Land is Our Land*, 7.
[124] Ann Louise Bardach, "Our Man in Miami," *The New Republic*, October 3, 1994, 20, 25.
[125] Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 179.

to exit the island's territorial waters. The new permissiveness of Castro's government drove 34,000 rafters to leave Cuban shores that summer.[126]

The Clinton Administration was particularly concerned about these developments. Clinton remembered the political damage that the Mariel boatlift had done to Jimmy Carter and the problems that it had caused him as governor of Arkansas. Clinton's Attorney General, Janet Reno, had also had significant experience with the crime surge in South Florida following the boatlift. Reno saw the balseros as a wave of illegal aliens trying to enter the United States. In response, the U.S. Coast Guard blocked the progress of the rafters at sea and redirected them to the American naval base at Guantanamo Bay.[127] When he publicly announced that the rafters would be sent to Guantanamo in an August press conference, Clinton called Castro's actions "a cold-blooded attempt to maintain the Castro grip on Cuba, and to divert attention from his failed communist policies." He accused Castro of attempting to export to the United States the political and economic crises he had created in Cuba in defiance of a larger movement toward democracy in the Americas. "The Cuban government will not succeed in any attempt to dictate American immigration policy," Clinton warned, "the United States will do everything within its power to ensure that Cuban lives are saved and that current outflow of refugees is stopped."[128]

When questioned about the embargo on Cuba and the increased economic burden on the island as a cause of the refugee influx and whether it was time to negotiate a movement toward democracy with the Cuban government, the President remained true to his previous

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[126] Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus*, 8.
[127] *Ibid*.
[128] William Jefferson Clinton, "Press Conference by the President," August 19, 1994, Folder—[OA-ID 10140] Cuba Press Conference 8/19/94, Box 28, FOIA 2006-0458-F Baer, Don, Communications, Clinton Presidential Records, William Clinton Presidential Library, Little Rock, AR (Hereafter cited as Clinton Library).

commitment to restrictions on Cuba. "I support the embargo, and I support the Cuban Democracy Act," Clinton told reporters, "and I do not believe we should change our policy there." When asked why a policy of isolation toward Cuba had been adopted while he dealt with authoritarian regimes in China and North Korea on a regular basis, Clinton gave a vague answer about circumstances being different in those cases. The president made it clear, however, that the Cuban Adjustment Act was still the law of the land and that any Cubans who reached American shores would be detained for review and be treated in accordance with immigration law, including the Act. When asked if intercepting the balseros and sending them to Guantanamo Bay was immoral, Clinton stated that it was his belief that "the American people and that the Cuban American people and the people of Florida –but the people of the entire United States—do not want to see another Mariel boatlift." [129]

The specter of Mariel hung heavy over the Clinton Administration's reaction to the rafter crisis. "The Administration's response protected southern coastal communities from the turmoil of a mass migration episode such as the Mariel Cuban influx of 1980," read *The President's Report on Immigration for 1994*. The report stated that the Mariel boatlift had done damage to Florida communities, created significant federal and state costs, had dampened the Nation's support for legal immigration, and had violated "the fundamental principle of border integrity that underlies our immigration system." The report claimed that the federal government's actions had prevented a repeat of the Mariel incident, saved thousands of lives, and maintained "essential humanitarian protections."[130] Clinton also found it politically expedient, in the context of the increasing anti-immigrant sentiment of the mid-1990s, to

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[129] Clinton, "Press Conference by the President," August 19, 1994

[130] Office of the President of the United States, *Accepting the Immigration Challenge: The President's Report on Immigration,* 1994, 65-66, Folder—[OA-ID 10131] Immigration, Box 1, FOIA 2006-0458-F Baer, Don, Communications, Clinton Presidential Records, Clinton Library.

publicly state that the United States did not want to see Cuba dictate its immigration policy as they had during Mariel.[131]

Memories of Mariel also colored the way Cuban Americans viewed the rafter crisis. *La Voz de la Calle* (The Voice of the Street), a Cuban American newspaper, ran a headline in late August which read "Massive Exodus Continues; the Second Mariel Has Begun."[132] The *Miami Herald* described how, as Clinton's policy toward the rafters evolved, the initial reaction of ambivalence or perplexity by the Cuban American community grew into anguish and discord. Cuban American lawyer and former chairman of the state Democratic Party Alfredo Duran described a situation of "extreme confusion" in the community. The images of the rafters standing behind barbed wire in Guantanamo or at the Krome detention center evoked another ghost of Mariel: indefinite detention. This time, however, indefinite detention was to be the fate of all Cuban refugees, not only those suspected or convicted of crimes. "It has changed status and privileges Cubans had for past 34 years," Duran told the newspaper.[133]

The feeling that the ground had suddenly shifted beneath their feet was widespread throughout the Cuban American community. Historian Félix Masud-Piloto began revising his 1988 history of the Cuban diaspora in the United States, *With Open Arms: Cuban Migration to the United States*. When he published a new edition in 1996, Masud-Piloto added a new chapter on the rafter crisis and changed the title of the book to *From Welcomed Exiles to Illegal Immigrants: Cuban Migration to the U.S., 1959-1995*. Masud-Piloto felt that this new titled

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[131] Clinton, "Press Conference by the President," August 19, 1994.
[132] "Continua Exodo Masivo El Mariel II Ha Comenzado," *La Voz de la Calle*, August 19, 1994.
[133] Andres Viglucci, "In Miami, 'extreme confusion,'" *Miami Herald*, August 25, 1994.

more accurately reflected "the evolution of and contradictions of U.S. policy."[134] American policy toward the balseros changed long-standing realities for Cuban exiles, but it also changed so rapidly that the shock forced many outside the community to adopt new positions. On August 20th, the *Herald* urged support for the Clinton-Reno policy, despite the pain that indefinite detention caused. It explained that the detention of the rafters hurt exiles, but it would also hurt Castro and might even topple him.[135] Less than a week later, the *Herald* denounced what it called "a dizzying, unfair change." The newspaper reiterated that indefinite detention was necessary, but the new policy changes that would deny them the right to apply for political asylum would be "unfair and unwise" and it would undercut support for American policy.[136]

The Cuban American lobby, having had time to grow in power, needed to negotiate a complicated political landscape in dealing with the rafter crisis. Some journalists portrayed the lobby's influence as absolute. Ann Louise Bardach reported that at an August 19 meeting at the White House saw Jorge Mas Canosa dictating U.S. Cuba policy to President Clinton. According to Bardach, Clinton had left his own birthday party to meet with Mas-Canosa, Florida Governor Lawton Chiles, and other Miami Cubans. There, Mas-Canosa "thumped and slapped the table as he spoke, demanding the president punish Fidel Castro for the refugee crisis."[137] The situation became all the more difficult, however, as the crisis dragged on into 1995 and the Clinton Administration made another policy change that solidified a new status for the Cuban American and exile communities. In early May, Janet Reno announced that most of the Cuban refugees

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[134] Félix Masud-Piloto, *From Welcomed Exiles to Illegal Immigrants: Cuban Migration to the U.S., 1959-1995* (Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1996), xxi.
[135] "A Painful Policy, but Right," editorial, *Miami Herald*, August 20, 1994.
[136] "A Dizzying, Unfair Change," editorial, *Miami Herald*, August 25, 1994.
[137] Ann Louise Bardach, "Our Man in Miami," *The New Republic*, October 3, 1994, 20.

detained in Guantanamo would be allowed to come to the United States. Any new balseros found at sea, however, would be sent back to Cuba.[138] The new policy sprang from a desire to ensure that, in the words of Governor Chiles, "Florida does not face another Mariel."[139] The *Herald* regarded the altered policy as difficult, but opined that it adopted "the 'least worst' of a set of options containing *no* wholly satisfying choices." While no one relished the idea of returning Cuban rafters to the island on American vessels, the new agreement between the Cuban and U.S. governments expanded the number of legal visas to leave Cuba. It was important, the *Herald* warned, that the federal government fully observe its pledge to heed rafters who claim reason for political asylum.[140]

Some greeted the news of this policy announcement with delight. Two groups in the state of Florida, the Save Our State Committee and Floridians for Immigration Control, had been preparing to present voters with measures cutting off aid to undocumented immigrants in the state. Modelled after California's controversial Proposition 187, the measures would propose constitutional amendments in the 1996 state-wide ballot. The Clinton Administration's decision to allow Cubans detained in Guantanamo to enter the United States would be "fuel to the fire," explained the supporters of these ballot measures in a tone described as "almost gleeful." Clinton's policy decision, said sociologist Lisandro Perez, was a balancing act that offended both those who were against the arrival of the Cuban rafters as well as the "Cubans offended by the notion of a deal with Fidel Castro."[141] This was particularly true of the Cuban American National Foundation and its allies, who immediately took to Cuban radio to denounce the deal. The

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[138] Liz Balmaseda, "Back and Forth, It's U.S. Policy That's Changed," *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995.
[139] Tom Fielder and Alfonso Chardy, "Goal of 'No More Mariels' Led to Clinton's Painful Choice," *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995.
[140] "Best of Bad Options," editorial, *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995.
[141] Andres Viglucci, "Cuba Shift May Stoke Prop 187 Campaigns," *Miami Herald*, May 4, 1995.

Foundation pledged to lobby the U.S. Congress to subtract all funds spent to interdict the Cuban balseros from the military services budget. More problematic was CANF's announcement that it would withdraw as a voluntary sponsor of Cuban immigrants. "By this gesture, the CANF puts its narrower political agenda above the broader and infinitely more important imperative to help these Cubans—these human beings—to being life anew in the United States," admonished the *Herald*.[142]

The problem for CANF and other groups, the newspaper would report some days later, was "a crisis in clout." The Foundation had bitterly broken its ties to the Clinton Administration over the issue of repatriation. This was not without consequences. "After years of wielding effective veto power over U.S. policies toward Cuba," reported Christopher Marquis, "the conservative Cuban-American lobby suddenly finds itself in a radically altered landscape that is much less sympathetic to its agenda." Even as CANF and other Cuban Americans denounced the Clinton Administration, they found less than ideal support from the Republican Party. Fiscal hawks in the House Budge Committed were calling for the elimination of government funding to Radio and TV Martí for the fiscal year to follow. Following the election of 1994 and the so-called "Republican Revolution," the desire for budget cuts and the anti-immigrant sentiment in Congress left CANF standing on unstable ground. Some, including State Department officials, predicted that there would be a shift in the Cuban community. The time was "ripe for a Democratic Mas Canosa." The change in Cuban immigration policy, however, had left Cuban American Democrats feeling "neutered" and too stunned or dismayed to step into the void.[143]

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[142] "Best of Bad Options," editorial, *Miami Herald*, May 3, 1995.
[143] Christopher Marquis, "A Crisis in Clout for Exiles," *Miami Herald*, May 14, 1995.

Marquis and other observers were heralding the decline of the Cuban American National Foundation and similar groups too hastily, but they were correctly identifying the frustration felt by the Cuban American lobby regarding the limits of their power. For decades, the Cuban American community had built on the federal largesse granted to the early waves of exiles and on its drive and background to grow its economic and political power in South Florida. The Cuban American community came of age as it solidified its place in Miami. In doing so, it came to wield the clout necessary to influence American foreign policy. The community sought to have a voice in determining its own destiny. The most effective lobbying organization in the Cuban community, the Cuban American National Foundation, was formed to exercise this power and to protect the image of the Cuban American community. In order to retain this power, the Foundation and other groups often sought to aid the federal government in attaining its goals at the expense of what some of its constituency saw as the community's best interest. As the balsero crisis threatened another Mariel, however, the political juggernaut of the Cuban American lobby encountered the immovable object of American politics and discovered the limits of its power; power preserved and retained, but power with restrictions. In 1995 the Cold War came to an end in Miami, not because the exile community had given up the desire to fight, but because the federal government that had been by turns its patron and its tool, yet had never shared its devotion, had moved on.

# EPILOGUE—"OUR CAUSE IS NOT UNDERSTOOD": CUBAN AMERICAN IDENTITY, POLITICS, AND THE END OF EXILE

"If living outside one's homeland is painful, it must be even more painful to die on foreign soil," wrote *Diairo Las Americas* columnist Uva de Aragón in the introduction to her 2006 book *Morir de Exilio* (*Death by Exile*). "To die in exile is not to have a land of one's own to even rest one's bones in," she explained.[1] In several decades of writing for the largest Spanish language newspaper in Miami, de Aragón had publised many pieces inspired by the death of writers, painters, musicians, political activists, and public figures who had been her friends. *Morir de Exilio* was a collection of "pages of mourning." It also celebrated the prolific lives that had left a significant mark. In her moving prose she recounted how banishment was used as a punishment in antiquity, remarking that this was "not strange, for forcibly living outside one's homeland is the equivalent of a spiritual death sentence." For an exile, banishment means always looking backward, longingly, with a desperate clinging to memories and dreams of return. The exile's vision of his homeland is frozen in a moment that was, the moment they were forced to leave. They long to return home, as if they could find their city, their neighborhood, their home just as they left it.[2] While the men and women de Aragón was writing about would never return to her homeland, their books, records, and pictures were returning to Cuba. "With this volume it might be possible to do that which death prevented: to

[1] Uva de Aragón, *Morir de Exilio* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 2006), 14 (translation mine).
[2] de Aragón, *Morir de Exilio*, 12.

repatriate these exiles, to return them to the country, to the culture from which they came and for which they bore fruit," de Aragón hoped.[3]

After the Clinton Administration changed long-standing policies regarding the entry of Cuban refugees into the United States, the hope for any return to Cuba, much less a swift return for exiles that had been waiting for decades, seemed further than ever before. As de Aragón wrote, more than ten years after the change, many of the exiles had died throughout the years waiting for what was once expected to be a swift return. The often heard statement from the early days of the exile, "we'll be back in Cuba in six months," had long since become a bitter reminder of the dashed hopes of the early refugee waves.[4] For many of these exiles, a return to Cuba would only come posthumously or symbolically as their ideas and works returned to their homeland when they could not. Many others had simply moved on from the idea that they were exiles at all. A survey conducted in late 1995 found that most of Miami's Cubans preferred to call themselves Cuban Americans rather than exiles. Only 17% of those who responded to the survey said they would permanently return to Cuba after the fall of Fidel Castro's regime. "Although their hearts and memories are in Cuba, their bank accounts, children and grandchildren are here," explained one of the men who oversaw the survey of Cuban Americans.[5]

This did not mean that Cuban Americans had given up the fight against Castro or had stopped trying to influence U.S. policy regarding Cuba. Following Clinton's policy change, large swaths of the Cuban American community protested the new policy through mass

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[3] *Ibid*, 15.
[4] Phrase quoted in Felix Roberto Masud-Piloto, *With Open Arms: Cuban Migration to the United States* (Totowa, NJ: Rowan & Littlefield, 1988), xiv.
[5] "Survey: Most Cubans Forgo 'Exile' Moniker," *Miami Herald*, November 24, 1995.

demonstrations on the streets of Miami. A week of traffic blockades followed the announcement of the new policy until exiles called for countrywide general strike. They sought to make the Clinton administration listen to its Cuban America constituents. "Either the administration hears us, or they ignore us and choose to cooperate with the Castro regime," said Ramon Saul Sanchez.[6] The Clinton administration did not change its policies, so Cuban American groups like Hermanos al Rescate (Brothers to the Rescue) redoubled their efforts to seek out those Cubans seeking to leave the island for the United States and rescue them. The group had also organized non-violent protest flights over Cuban airspace, challenging the Cuban government. On February 24, 1996 two of their aircraft were shot down by MIG fighter jets belonging to the Cuban Air Force.[7] The Cuban government responded to international criticism by stating it had begged the United States government to stop the flights, which they had refused to do, allowing Hermanos al Rescate to continue provoking the Castro regime.[8] While the incident caused President Bill Clinton to back new measures against investment in Cuba, the United States was unable to gain sufficient support for strong action against Cuba by the United Nations.[9]

Militant members of the Cuban community faced other challenges even as the United States government lost the urgency to oppose Castro's government. After a piece in *The New Republic* had described Cuban American National Foundation Chairman Jorge Mas Canosa as "mobster and megalomaniac," Mas Canosa sued both the magazine and the piece's author Ann

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[6] Dexter Filkins and Alfonso Chardy, "Exiles: We Won't Quite Until Policy Is Reversed," *Miami Herald*, May 13, 1995.
[7] Larry Rohter, "Exiles Say Cuba Downed 2 Planes and Clinton Expresses Outrage," *New York Times*, February 25, 1996.
[8] Barbara Crossette, "Cuba, Citing Earlier Intrusions, Defend Downing of 2 Cessnas," *New York Times*, March 7, 1996.
[9] Jerry Gray, "President Agrees to Tough New Set of Curbs on Cuba," *New York Times*, February 29, 1996 and Barbara Crossette, "U.N. Won't Punish Cuba in Downing of Planes," *New York Times*, July 27, 1996.

Louise Bardach.[10] Mas Canosa believed that he had been defamed by the article. He declared that it was filled with lies, taking particular objection to being called a mobster.[11] While the suit was eventually settled out of court and the magazine issued an apology, the extensive depositions of Mas Canosa became a matter of public record and exposed the CANF executive to scrutiny. After what the *Miami Herald* called "a grueling exploration of his life" the depositions exposed "a complicated portrait of one of Miami's most prominent men." It also revealed that despite his anti-communist bluster, Mas Canosa's business ventures had led to an attempt by his son, Jorge Mas Santos, to acquire a machinery conglomerate in the People's Republic of China. The depositions also brought to light Mas Canosa's shady business practices and brushes with legal authorities.[12] For a lobbyist whose power was derived not only from his wealth and that of his associates, but from his connections to the politically powerful, this type of public dissection was inconvenient, if not outright damaging.

Mas Canosa died in late 1997. His son, Jorge Mas Santos became vice chairman of the Foundation in 1998 and, following a unanimous vote the following year, became the new CANF chairman.[13] As Chairman, Mas Santos would experience a crisis of identity in the wake of the maritime rescue of a five year old refugee named Elian Gonzalez. The boat on which Gonzalez and his mother were attempting to cross the Florida Straits sank, killing seven people, leaving three missing and causing two survivors to wash ashore on Key Biscayne. On Thanksgiving Day, 1999, a group of fishermen rescued the young boy and delivered him to American authorities

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[10] Ann Louise Bardach, "Our Man in Miami," *The New Republic*, October 3, 1994, 20, 20.
[11] Jorge Mas Canosa, "Deposition of Jorge Mas Canosa," January 10, 1996, Folder 20, Box 1, The New Republic-Jorge Mas Canosa Collection, 1979-1996, Florida International University Special Collections, Miami, Florida.
[12] Lisa Getter and Jeff Leen, "Suit Prompts Tough Look at Mas Canosa in Depositions," *Miami Herald*, August 2, 1996.
[13] Wilfredo Cancio Isla, "Mas Santos Asume la Presidencia de la Fundación," *El Nuevo Herald*, July 19, 1999.

who declared that the three survivors would not be deported to Cuba.[14] Elian was quickly released to the custody of his uncle Lazaro Gonzalez in Miami. Within days, the boy was at the center of an international controversy as the Cuban government declared that Elian's father, who was divorced from his late mother, wanted him returned to Cuba. Juan Miguel Gonzalez appeared on a broadcast from Cuba stating that if the United States was "such a country of human rights, they should return my child."[15] The Cuban American National Foundation, meanwhile, circulated an image of the boy with a heading that read "Another Child Victim of Fidel Castro."[16] The boy's uncle was also adamant about the fact that he wanted the boy to remain in the United States. "His mother was bringing him to freedom," said Lazaro Gonzalez, "and we don't want him to go back to a Communist system."[17]

While surviving parents were normally awarded custody in cases like Elian's, the tensions between Cuba, the United States, and the Cuban American community complicated the situation. Castro countered the Cuban American community's rhetoric with his own talk of freedom for Elian. "There will be millions of people in the streets demanding the boy's freedom," Castro said of his own people, accusing the United States government of kidnapping the child. The Cuban leader also blamed deaths, like those of Elian's mother and the other victims of the sinking, on the American government. "The United States is the only one responsible for the tragedies produced by illegal departures," he charged. While American officials stated that a Florida state court would decide whether Elian would remain in the United States or be returned to his father and grandparents in Cuba, Cuban authorities rejected the idea that the "corrupt judges" of a state where their political opponents held sway could be fair.

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[14] "3 Who Survived Sinking Won't Be Deported," *New York Times*, November 27, 1999.
[15] David Gonzalez, "Cuban Government Enters Fight for Boy," *New York Times*, November 30, 1999.
[16] "Future Unclear for Cuban Boy In Doomed Boat," *New York Times*, November 29, 1999.
[17] "The Future of Elian Gonzalez," *New York Times*, November 30, 1999.

The court would have to weigh the conflict between the surviving parent's claim and the Cuban Adjustment Act, which stated that any Cuban who reached American soil had the right to stay. In the meantime, Castro expressed anger about media portrayals of the boy surrounded by toys and wearing a Cuban American National Foundation t-shirt.[18]

Elian's case dragged on for months as different parties fought over the fate of the boy. The battle over the boy's custody came to a head in March of 2000 when judge K. Michael Moor of the United States District Court dismissed a lawsuit requesting a political asylum hearing for Elian, concluding that a drawn out legal battle was not in the child's best interest.[19] In the wake of this decision, much of the Cuban American community closed ranks around Lazaro Gonzalez, with some fifty people holding a vigil around his home at all times. After federal authorities ordered Gonzalez to hand over Elian, Cuban Americans expressed outrage at the decision. "This is a battle between good and evil, and right now America is evil," a retired exile schoolteacher told reporters.[20] Local authorities dragged their feet in cooperating with federal officials to secure the return of the boy, until, almost a month later and following 44 hours of constant negotiation, federal authorities raided Lazaro Gonzalez's home. The raid, conducted in the early hours of the morning of April 22, 2000, lasted only 154 seconds in which eight federal agents entered the house, overpowered the security provided for the Gonzalez family by the Cuban American National Foundation, and removed Elian. Within four hours the child was reunited with his father. In the hours that followed, angry Cuban Americans draped black ribbons over a large American flag flying over Lazaro Gonzalez's door. They were followed by a group of elderly

[18] "Cuba Impatient for Return of Rescued Boy, Castro Says," *New York Times*, December 6, 1999.
[19] Rick Bragg, "Judge Upholds Plan for Return of Boy to Cuba," *New York Times*, March 22, 2000.
[20] Rick Bragg, "Standoff Over Cuban Boy's Fate Intensifies," *New York Times*, March 29, 2000.

men who delivered a funeral wreath of white and blue carnations adorned with a ribbon that read "R.I.P. Democracia."[21]

An image of Elian being removed from his uncle's home by armed federal agents spread through national and international media outlets. The raid and the images that documented it caused rage among the Cuban American community. Octavio Del Rio, a former Cuban political prisoner, stated that his former belief that the people were respected in the United States had left him. "The general impression among Cubans here is that we are alone," Del Rio stated, "Our cause is not understood." Others stated feelings of general disgust. The reaction to the raid was not universal, however, and different perspectives often came along ethnic lines. One white non-Hispanic resident stated to the *Herald* that Janet Reno was "a hero" and that the raid should have been conducted much earlier. "I believe the Cuban-American people do not act by U.S. law," she told reporters.[22] Cuban Americans were appalled at the way they were being portrayed by the media and how they were viewed by those outside their community. "I'm a liberal Democrat, a card-carrying member of the ACLU… And now I've been hearing all kinds of things, that we're punks, thugs, murderers, Mafia," said Juan Carlos Espinosa of the Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies at the University of Miami. "They're saying this about the community we grew up in," Espinosa despaired. Rafael Peñalver put it even more succinctly when he stated that he had been "appalled by the hatred, the bigotry."[23]

"This is a defining moment in the Cuban exile experience," said Cuban American sociologist Ruben Rumbaut, "It is as big as the Bay of Pigs, as big as Mariel." Many of the

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[21] "Lightning Move Took Agents Just 154 Seconds," *Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000.
[22] Fabiola Santiago, Daniel de Vise, and Martin Merzer, "Raid Stuns, Enthralls Fractured Public," *Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000.
[23] Fabiola Santiago and John Dorschner, "Outside Image Bewilders Exiles," *Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000.

younger members of the community who had long identified with more moderate positions than their parents found themselves facing a sort of identity crisis.[24] As Jorge Mas Santos travelled the country during the Elian Gonzalez affair and in its aftermath, he realized that Cubans throughout the United States had come to understand something about themselves. "I'm Cuban," they realized, "I'm different."[25] The nature of the conflict showed many Cuban Americans, long seen as the most successfully assimilated Hispanic community that despite their political and economic successes, their Cubanidad set them aside from other groups in the United States. In Miami, this led to multiple demonstrations and to a general work stoppage on April 25, 2000. "We declare Miami a 'dead city' on Tuesday," read a joint statement by 21 exile organizations.[26] The community's anger did not dissipate overnight and neither did that of the city's non-Cuban citizens. This led to elected Cuban Americans having to walk "a careful line" as they both expressed outrage over the federal raid and urged protesters to remain calm.[27]

The conflict left many in Miami attempting to walk their own careful lines as they sought to maintain the city's economy and reputation while still expressing pride in the Cuban community and its accomplishments. Civic and political leaders, including Jorge Mas Santos, sought to bring the 2001 Latin Grammy Awards to Miami in an effort to improve the community's image following Elian's removal and its aftermath. These leaders successfully courted the awards, but the threat of protests by Cuban American organizations led the

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[24] *Ibid*.
[25] Jorge Mas Santos, interview by Julio Estorino, August 4, 2011, Cuban Heritage Collection Luis J. Botifoll Oral History Project, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.
[26] Alfonso Chardry, "One-Day Strike, Peaceful Protests Urged," *Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000.
[27] Don Finefrock and Karen Branch, "Leaders Express Ire, Call for Calm in Dade," *Miami Herald*, April 23, 2000.

organizers to move the ceremony to Los Angeles.[28] Despite the failure to secure the Latin Grammys for Miami, Cuban Americans would have their own gala in 2001 to celebrate the restoration of one of the most important symbols of the Cuban exile and their time in the United States: the Freedom Tower. In September of 1997, the Jorge Mas Canosa and his family had purchased the former site of the Cuban Refugee Center for $4,200,000 with the intention of creating a permanent museum there. The once majestic building had fallen on hard times following the closing of the center in 1974.[29] Several failed ventures had seen the tower used as a venue for wedding parties and galas and proposed as office space for multiple entities. Following these failures the building had become "a home to vagrants who spent nights there and scribbled graffiti on its crumbling walls."[30]

"For Cuban exiles, the tower represents something similar to Ellis Island—it's a symbol of Freedom," stated Jorge Mas Santos, "We wanted to leave a permanent structure that would speak to our history and be a symbol for people fleeing a totalitarian regime. It is also a testament to the greatness of this country and its willingness to welcome us with open arms." The Cuban American National Foundation took the lead in repairing and restoring the tower, a $40,000,000 project.[31] In order to fund the project, more than 10,000 people gathered in the show of the tower to raise the millions of dollars needed to complete the restoration. The event featured an exclusive $500 a person fundraiser within the building and a public block party including a mass and a concert headlined by musicians like Wily Chirino, Jon Secada, Gloria Estefan, and Celia Cruz. "After 40 years of exile, of struggle, of pain, of blood spilled, this shows

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[28] Miguel A. De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba: Religion and Politics on the Streets of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 133.
[29] Stephen Smith, "Freedom Tower Part of Past, Future for Architect," *Miami Herald*, May 13, 2001.
[30] Fabiola Santiago, "Freedom Tower to Get New Life, Mark Exiles' History," *Miami Herald*, May 13, 2001.
[31] *Ibid*.

that we are a people who have succeeded and who will not give up our dream of a free Cuba," Mas Santos told the assembled crowds before the start of a fireworks show. "This building is our gift back to this community," he went on, "which welcomed us with open arms."[32]

As many in Miami sought to heal the wounds left by the Elian Gonzalez affair, many also sought to obtain retribution for the actions of the Clinton Administration. Going into the election of 2000, Clinton's Vice President, Al Gore, was trailing by almost 20 points in the state of Florida. The Cuban American community was still seething with anger over the Elian Gonzalez affair and Gore's attempts to distance himself from Clinton and Reno's actions was seen by many as pandering.[33] While the Vice President carried the heavily Cuban Dade County on Election Day, the inroads Clinton had made into the Cuban American community were almost entirely reversed in 2000. In a contested state where the vote differential came down to a few hundred votes, the Cuban American community cast a quarter of a million more votes for Bush than they did for Gore.[34] "Who can dispute that the Cuban vote elected President Bush?" asked Miami City Commissioner Tomás Regalado.[35] As the Bush and Gore campaigns entered a legal battle over a recount in the state of Florida, the influence of the Cuban community in halting the hand recount of votes in Miami-Dade County was questioned. The *New York Times* speculated that Miami-Dade County mayor Alex Penelas had been "working both sides of the political fight after the election, and especially in the days surrounding last week's cancelled recount." Republican lawmakers and lawyers had been in touch with Penelas and two Democratic county judges, Lawrence King and Myriam Lehr, who were members of the canvassing board. While

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[32] Elaine De Valle, "Freedom Tower Gala Lures Thousands," *Miami Herald*, May 20. 2001.
[33] Kevin Sack, "How Florida Got Close Enough to Fight Over," *New York Times*, November 19, 2000.
[34] William Finnegan, "The Cuban Strategy," The New Yorker, March 15, 2004. http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/03/15/the-cuban-strategy (Accessed May 9, 2015.)
[35] De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba*, 135.

both judges claimed not to be under pressure to halt the recount, the *Times* speculated that halting the recount might have been an act of political self-preservation. "It is not possible to judge how much their actions might have been influence by the realpolitik of Miami, where non-Hispanic white politicians cannot discount the sentiments of Miami-Dade County's largely Republican Cuban-American voting base," suggested the *Times*.[36]

George W. Bush ultimately took the office of the president and he maintained a relationship with the anti-Castro elements in the Cuban community. During a celebration of the 99th anniversary of Cuban independence at the White House in 2001, President Bush indicated he wanted to continue the embargo against Cuba as "a moral statement."[37] By 2004, however, many Cuban Americans had grown disappointed with Bush as he had not extended a warmer welcome to Cuban refugees or taken a harder line with Castro than his predecessor. Others were unhappy at the lengths the Bush Administration had gone to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq while Castro remained in Cuba undisturbed. A poll conducted by Univision in early 2004 showed that more than one third of Latino voters disapproved of the job President Bush had done in "promoting democracy and regime change" in Cuba.[38] Once again, the Cuban community's hope for regime change in Cuba resulting from the election of an American political candidate to the presidency had proven fruitless.

The failures of the Bush administration would be enumerated by Jorge Mas Santos in an opinion piece entitled "How to Win the Cuban American Vote." He charged that American policy had failed to empower "independent civil society" in Cuba and that Bush's policies had

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[36] Don Van Natta Jr. and Dexter Filkins, "Miami Mayor's Role a Riddle In Decision to Halt Recount," *New York Times*, December 1, 2000.
[37] De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba*, 74.
[38] Finnegan, "The Cuban Strategy."

harmed those sectors of Cuban society most likely to destabilize the Castro regime. "As a direct result of President Bush's strategic blunder in 2004 restricting contact with the island," Mas Santos wrote, "Cuban dissidents have experienced a significant reduction in material and humanitarian assistance." The Bush administration had also been caught off guard when Fidel Castro left office and transferred power over to his brother Raúl. Mas Santos declared that the next president of the United States had to end America's spectator approach. CANF had presented the campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama with "simple recommendations based on two basic premises: (a) the status quo is unacceptable; and (b) change needs to come from within Cuba." Specifically, Mas Santos and CANF made suggestions that included that the restriction of cash aid to dissidents be lifted, that the 2004 restrictions on travel and remittances by Cuban Americans be eliminated so the community could become active participants in the development of Cuban civil society, and that the United States engage democratic and reformist forces in Cuba. Mas Santos understood that both candidates wanted to help the Cuban people, but Barack Obama's "forward-looking and proactive approach toward empowering the Cuban people is more in line with these proposals than John McCain's vow to continue the Bush administration's policy." More of the same would not bring about freedom in Cuba; it was time for a change in policy.[39]

Many Cuban Americans were upset at Mas Santos's recommendation. There were already some who were upset with the Cuban American National Foundation's new direction. In 2001, some CANF members including former spokesperson Ninoska Pérez Castellón left the organization because they felt it was moving toward the political center.[40] In a response to Mas Santos's endorsement of Senator Obama, Cuban American blogger Manuel Tellechea

[39] Jorge Mas Santos, "How to Win the Cuban American Vote," *Washington Post*, October 25, 2008.
[40] De La Torre, *La Lucha for Cuba*, 136.

characterized the schism in the Foundation as a purge. Furthermore, he found Mas Santos wanting in relation to his father, referring to him as "our Fidelito" and noting that Mas Canosa had been "bigger than his creation." Without CANF, Mas Santos's opinions "would matter as much to the Washington Post as any other Cuban exile's, and it is doubtful whether it would even have reported his endorsement of a presidential candidate." While Tellechea did not disagree that the Bush administration's policies toward Cuba were static and counterproductive, he found inaction better than a scenario in which United States policy went in the wrong direction. "The resumption of diplomatic relations with Communist Cuba, which Obama's disposition to placate the tyrant will ensure," he wrote, "would be the greatest victory ever obtained by the Revolution at the expense of the United States since the Missile Crisis."[41] Obama was unable to gain the majority of the Cuban American vote in the 2008 election, but he gained a significant portion of the community's vote. In 2012, he improved on his 2008 results, narrowly losing the Cuban American majority to Mitt Romney 52-48%.[42]

President Obama's election brought about a rise in a new conservative movement, the anti-establishment "Tea Party." This new movement helped bring about a significant defeat for the new president in the 2010 midterm election as the Democratic Party lost its majority in the House of Representatives. One of the most visible politicians to rise to prominence in 2010 was a South Florida Cuban American Republican that would be dubbed the "crown prince" of the Tea Party movement, Senator Marco Rubio. The charismatic young Cuban American had been active in Florida politics for a decade and a half, having served as a county chairman for Robert

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[41] Manuel A. Tellechea, "CANF's Jorge Más Santos Endorses Barack Obama," Review of Cuban-American Blogs, October 27, 2008, accessed May 11, 2008, http://reviewofcuban-americanblogs.blogspot.com/2008/10/canfs-jorge-ms-santos-endorses-barack.html.
[42] Marc Caputo, "Poll: Obama Got Big Share of Cuban American Vote, Won Among Other Hispanics in Florida," *Miami Herald*, November 8, 2012, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/article1944391.html.

Dole's presidential campaign in 1996. In 1999 he won a seat to the Florida House of Representatives. Three years later he became majority leader of that body, and within seven years of his election he became Speaker of the House. Rubio defeated former governor Charlie Crist to gain his seat and in 2012 was mentioned as a possible vice presidential candidate for the Romney campaign. In 2013, Rubio was selected to deliver the first bilingual rebuttal to the State of the Union Address in the history of the United States.[43] Rubio's conservative politics, his youth, and his Cuban American identity made him a sought after commodity within the Republican Party and the most high profile Cuban American politician to date.

Within two years of his election to the Senate, Rubio was joined by another Cuban American Senator; Rafael Edward "Ted" Cruz of Texas. Cruz, the former Solicitor General of Texas, was the first Hispanic or Cuban American to serve as a United States Senator from his state. Cruz, son of a firebrand evangelical minister who shared the views of some of the more conspiratorial elements of the conservative movement, soon became a guardian of the Republican Party's ideological purity. "It is amazing that the wisdom of the chattering class to the Republicans is always, always, always 'Surrender your principles and agree with the Democrats,'" Cruz told the *New Yorker* in 2014. In the eyes of many, Cruz became a central figure in the split within the Republican Party and the conflict between its moderate and conservative wings. Many within the former group came to consider Cruz a liability after his opposition to the Affordable Care Act significantly contributed to the shutdown of the federal government in 2013. While establishment Republicans determined that the shutdown was "not

[43] James M. Linday, "Marco Rubio: All You Need to Know," *Newsweek*, April 16, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.newsweek.com/marco-rubio-all-you-need-know-322760.

a productive enterprise," Cruz "hardened his positions, delighting the base of his party but moving father from the position of most Americans on most issues."[44]

In March of 2015, Cruz announced that he would be taking his brand of conservative politics to the national stage as a candidate for President of the United States. Cruz made the announcement at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Standing on stage at the evangelical institution, Cruz faced a clamoring crowd of Liberty students and announced his bid, becoming the first major presidential contender to formally declare himself a candidate for the 2016 election. "It is the time for truth," Cruz told his audience, "It is the time for liberty. It is the time to reclaim the Constitution of the United States."[45] Within less than a month of Cruz's announcement, Marco Rubio announced his own candidacy for President. "Tonight, grounded by the lessons of our history, but inspired by the promise of our future, I announce my candidacy for president of the United States," Rubio told his supporters.[46] Rubio being "grounded in the lessons of our history" could be taken in more than one way, given that he made his announcement at a reception in the Freedom Tower. While he appealed to a broader base by alluding to the nation's history, he was also making a direct reference to his origins and to the shared experience of the Cuban diaspora. As the *Miami New Times* noted, however, it was also to Rubio's advantage that the Tower was "a photogenic locale with a GOP-friendly name like the 'Freedom Tower.'"[47] The story of the Cuban exile flight from a communist state

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[44] Jeffrey Toobin, "The Asolutist," *The New Yorker*, June 30, 2014, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/06/30/the-absolutist-2.

[45] Katie Zezima and David A. Fahrenthold, "Ted Cruz: 'I Am Running for President of the United States,'" *Washington Post*, March 23, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2015/03/23/ted-cruz-announces-presidential-run/.

[46] Ed O'Keefe and Manuel Roig-Franzia, "Marco Rubio Launches Presidential Campaign," *Washington Post*, April 13, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-politics/wp/2015/04/13/marco-rubio-set-to-announce-presidential-bid/.

[47] Tim Elfrink, "Marco Rubio's Freedom Tower Presidential Announcement: What You Need to Know," *Miami New Times*, April 13, 2015, accessed May 11, 2015,

toward the United States and the successes of the Cuban American community made for an appealing narrative from which to launch a bid for the presidency.

While both Rubio and Cruz had long harbored larger political ambitions, their candidacies were likely also propelled by a change in U.S.-Cuba relations which was announced in December of 2014. After eighteen months of secret talks conducted with the aid of the Vatican and Pope Francis, the United States and Cuba moved to end decades of tension. President Obama ordered the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Cuba and that a new embassy be opened in Havana. "We will end an outdated approach that for decades has failed to advance our interests, and instead we will begin to normalize relations between our two countries," Obama declared in a nationally televised statement from the White House. This announcement caused an immediate reaction from Republican lawmakers who would be taking control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate the following month, who vowed that they would resist the lifting of the trade embargo against Cuba. "This entire policy shift announced today is based on an illusion, on a lie, the lie and the illusion that more commerce and access to money and goods will translate to political freedom for the Cuban people," declared Marco Rubio.[48] President Obama also drew criticism from Cuban American Democratic Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey for executive action that would weaken the embargo. The changes to be made by the President were "clearly intended to circumvent the intent and spirit of U.S. law and the U.S. Congress."[49]

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http://www.miaminewtimes.com/news/marco-rubios-freedom-tower-presidential-announcement-what-you-need-to-know-7569374.

[48] Peter Baker, "U.S. to Restore Full Relations with Cuba, Erasing a Last Trace of Cold War Hostility," *New York Times*, December 17, 2014.

[49] Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Michael R. Gordon, "Obama Will Move Swiftly to Lift Several Restrictions Against Cuba," *New York Times*, December 19, 2014.

It was not only politicians who expressed displeasure with President Obama's actions regarding Cuba. "Horrible. Horrible. What he did was repulsive," declared 70 year-old exile Ana María Lamar the day after the President's announcement, "Obama said Castro was no longer a terrorist! Come on!" Others observed that the reaction was not as drastic as it might have been. Speaking of a protest held outside the famous Versailles restaurant in Little Havana, Jorge Mas Santos noted that it was not as large as it might have been. "Look at the reaction two days ago—20 people there, protesting," said Mas Santos, "Hialeah, there were celebrations. Our community has changed. I never say it is divided. It has just changed." Many in the community had had a different life experience than that of his parents' generation. While Mas and CANF were against legitimizing the Castro regime, they did note there would be some positive changes. Changes in telecommunications policies would provide greater access to the internet to Cubans on the island. This would allow for new approaches to CANF's mission, which they sought to convey to those distraught Cuban Americans who contacted the Foundation. "Our tactics have to change, but the game doesn't change," Mas Santos stated, "ultimately, what I tell all of them is that we will prevail. We will soon be witnessing a free and democratic Cuba. Ultimately, freedom prevails over oppression."[50]

Scholars and experts declared that the diplomatic moves by the United States and Cuba suggested that the transition on the island would be conventional and peaceful. José Gabilondo, professor of law at Florida International University, explained that this would not mean a return to the Cuba that existed before the revolution. "You can't put the toothpaste

[50] Joel Achenbach, "For Some Cuban Exiles, the Old Toast 'Next year in Cuba!' is Suddenly More Plausible," Chicago Tribune, December 20, 2014, accessed May 11, 2015, http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-cuba-exiles-return-20141220-story.html#page=1.

back in the tube," Gabilondo warned.[51] The Cuba the older exiles longed for no longer existed, if it ever truly did, and regime change on the island would not bring it back. The younger exiles and Cuban Americans could understand the deeply held convictions of their parents and grandparents, but their experiences were different. Change would have to come with time, as the older generations experienced death by exile and their children and grandchildren embraced life in the United States under a complicated identity both Cuban and American. "The way to have a new Cuba is biological," said Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado, "At least two or three generations have to disappear before everything is forgotten. Until nobody cares what happened in Cuba."

[51] Achenbach, "For Some Cuban Exiles, the Old Toast 'Next year in Cuba!' is Suddenly More Plausible."

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Education

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
Ph.D. Candidate, History 2009-present
Dissertation Title: *Casablanca of the Caribbean: Cuban Refugees, Local Power, and Cold War Policy in Miami, 1959-1995* – Expected Graduation: August 2015
Major Field: Twentieth Century U.S. History
Minor Field: Gender and Nation in Global History
Minor Field: Hispanic Borderlands of the United States
Graduate Teaching Certificate in Women's Studies

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
M.A., History, 2009

Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY
B.A., History, 2003

Teaching Experience

Graduate Instructor – Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
History 152 – "United States Since 1877" – Fall 2011 and Spring 2014

Teaching Assistant – Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
History 152 – "United States Since 1877" – Instructor: David Atkinson – Fall 2013
History 371 – "Society, Culture, and Rock and Roll" – Instructor: Michael Morrison – Summer 2013
History 152 – "United States Since 1877" – Instructor: David Atkinson – Spring 2012

History 371 – "Society, Culture, and Rock and Roll" – Instructor: Michael Morrison – Spring 2011
History 371 – "Society, Culture, and Rock and Roll" – Instructor: Michael Morrison – Fall 2010
History 366 – "Hispanic Heritage of the United States" – Instructor: Charles Cutter – Spring 2010
History 271 – "Latin American History to 1824" – Instructor: Charles Cutter – Fall 2009
History 371 – "Society, Culture, and Rock and Roll" – Instructor: Michael Morrison – Spring 2009
History 105 – "Survey of Global History" – Instructor: Michael Smith – Fall 2008
History 387 – "History of the Space Age" – Instructor: Michael Smith – Spring 2008
History 152 – "United States Since 1877" – Instructor: Yvonne Pitts – Fall 2007

Publications

In Print/Forthcoming

Articles

Decker, Alicia C. and Mauricio Castro. "Teaching History with Comic Books: A Case Study of Violence, War, and the Graphic Novel." *The History Teacher* 45, no. 2 (February 2012): 169-187.

Book Chapters

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Encyclopedia Entries

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Book Reviews

Castro, Mauricio. "Group Identity and the Scholar's Responsibility," Review of A Grounded Identidad: Making New Lives in Chicago's Puerto Rican Neighborhoods, by Mérida M. Rúa. H-Urban, H-Net Reviews. September, 2014.

Castro, Mauricio. Review of *Black Culture and the New Deal: The Quest for Civil Rights in the Roosevelt Era*, by Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff. *The Southern Historian* 32, (2011): 121-122.

Other Publications

Castro, Mauricio. "No More Tall Buildings: American Superhero Comics and the Shadow of 9/11." *Re-Visioning Terrorism*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue E-Pubs, online.

Academic Presentations

"'Other Civilized Ways to Struggle:' Jorge Mas Canosa, the Cuban American National Foundation, and the Projection of Local Power." Organization of American Historians 2016 Annual Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, April 2016.

Participant "Roundtable on Latinos in the American Landscape." Vernacular Architecture Forum 2015, Chicago, Illinois, June 2015.

Panel co-organizer and participant: "Roundtable: Postwar Latino Urban History." Seventh Biennial Urban History Association Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 2014.

"'The First City in the U.S. to Ever Have a Communist State as a Next Door Neighbor:' the Cuban Diaspora and the National Security State in Miami." Imagining Latina/o Studies: Past, Present, and Future Conference, Chicago, Illinois, July 2014.

Panel Organizer: "Urban Politics and the Decline of the Welfare State." 2014 Conference on Policy History, Columbus, Ohio, June 2014.

"'Being a Cuban Ain't Bad:' Federal Refugee Policy, African American Discontent, and a Changing Miami, 1959-1973." 2014 Conference on Policy History, Columbus, Ohio, June 2014.

"'The Cuban Turned to the Church for Help:' The Catholic Church and Federal Refugee Policy in Miami." Beyond the Culture Wars Conference, Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, St. Louis, Missouri, March 2014.

"Some Other Place: Cuban Americans, Miami, and the Intersections of the Local, the National, and the Transnational." New Directions in Cuban Studies Conference, University of Miami, March 2014.

"Amazons, Supermen, and War: Militarization in Wonder Woman #25 and the Comics Book Industry." National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, November 2013.

"Casablanca of the Caribbean: Refugees, Race, and Federal Policy in Miami, 1959-1984." Sixth Biennial Urban History Association Conference, New York, New York, October 2012.

"'A City That Is Constrained To Lead Two Lives': Cuban Refugee Policy, Urban Development, and Political Evolution in Miami, 1959-1972." 2012 Conference on Policy History, Richmond, Virginia, June 2012.

"No More Tall Buildings: American Superhero Comics and the Shadow of 9/11." Re-Visioning Terrorism: An Interdisciplinary and International Conference, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, 2011.

"The Evolution of Unknown Soldier: Teaching Ugandan History Through Comic Books." Graphic Engagement: The Politics of Comics and Animation, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, 2010.

"Private Spaces, Public Screens: Ozu Yasujiro and the Japanese Family in the Post-War," IU-Purdue Asian American Studies Conference, Indiana University, 2009.

Awards and Honors

Bilsland Dissertation Fellowship, Purdue University Graduate School.
Samuel Flagg Bemis Dissertation Research Grant 2012, Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations.
Abba P. Schwartz Research Fellowship 2012, John F. Kennedy Library Foundation.
Moody Research Grant 2012, Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation.
PRF Year-Long Research Grant 2012, Purdue Research Foundation, Purdue University.
CHC Graduate Fellowship 2012, Cuban Heritage Collection, University of Miami.
Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation Research Travel Grant 2012, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum.
Woodman Travel Award 2012, Purdue University Department of History.

Service Experience

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|---|---|
| Urban History Association Board of Directors Graduate Student Rep. | 2014-Present |
| Sexual Harassment Advisors Network, Purdue College of Liberal Arts | 2013-Present |
| Purdue History Graduate Student Association President | 2010-2012 |
| Purdue History Department Graduate Committee | 2010-2012 |
| Purdue History Department Diversity Committee | 2009-2012 |
| Purdue History Graduate Student Association American Representative | 2009-2010 |
| Purdue History Graduate Student Association Representative-at-Large | 2008-2009 |
| History Department Majors' Committee, Vassar College | 2000-2002 |

Languages

Spanish: Native fluency in reading, writing, speaking.
Russian: Undergraduate coursework.
German: Undergraduate coursework.

Professional Memberships

American Historical Association
National Women's Studies Association
Organization of American Historians
Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations
Urban History Association